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Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires (Review)

Edwards PJ, Roberts I, Clarke MJ, DiGuseppi C, Wentz R, Kwan I, Cooper R, Felix LM, Pratap S

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[Methodology Review]

Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Philip James Edwards¹, Ian Roberts², Mike J Clarke³, Carolyn DiGiuseppi⁴, Reinhard Wentz⁵, Irene Kwan⁶, Rachel Cooper⁷, Lambert M Felix¹, Sarah Pratap⁸

¹Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, UK. ²Cochrane Injuries Group, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, UK. ³UK Cochrane Centre, Oxford, UK. ⁴Colorado Injury Control Research Center, Colorado School of Public Health, University of Colorado Denver, Denver, CO, USA. ⁵Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, London, UK. ⁶National Collaborating Centre For Women's and Children's Health, Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists, London, UK. ⁷Public Health Intervention Research Unit, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK. ⁸Redhill, Reigate & Horley PCMH, Reigate, UK

Contact address: Philip James Edwards, Department of Epidemiology and Population Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London, WC1E 7HT, UK. phil.edwards@lshtm.ac.uk.

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ABSTRACT

Background

Postal and electronic questionnaires are widely used for data collection in epidemiological studies but non-response reduces the effective sample size and can introduce bias. Finding ways to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires would improve the quality of health research.

Objectives

To identify effective strategies to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires.

Search methods

We searched 14 electronic databases to February 2008 and manually searched the reference lists of relevant trials and reviews, and all issues of two journals. We contacted the authors of all trials or reviews to ask about unpublished trials. Where necessary, we also contacted authors to confirm methods of allocation used and to clarify results presented. We assessed the eligibility of each trial using pre-defined criteria.

Selection criteria

Randomised controlled trials of methods to increase response to postal or electronic questionnaires.

Data collection and analysis

We extracted data on the trial participants, the intervention, the number randomised to intervention and comparison groups and allocation concealment. For each strategy, we estimated pooled odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) in a random-effects model. We assessed evidence for selection bias using Egger's weighted regression method and Begg's rank correlation test and funnel plot. We assessed heterogeneity among trial odds ratios using a Chi² test and the degree of inconsistency between trial results was quantified using the I² statistic.

Main results

Postal

We found 481 eligible trials. The trials evaluated 110 different ways of increasing response to postal questionnaires. We found substantial heterogeneity among trial results in half of the strategies. The odds of response were at least doubled using monetary incentives (odds ratio 1.87; 95% CI 1.73 to 2.04; heterogeneity $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 84\%$), recorded delivery (1.76; 95% CI 1.43 to 2.18; $P = 0.0001$, $I^2 = 71\%$), a teaser on the envelope - e.g. a comment suggesting to participants that they may benefit if they open it (3.08; 95% CI 1.27 to 7.44) and a more interesting questionnaire topic (2.00; 95% CI 1.32 to 3.04; $P = 0.06$, $I^2 = 80\%$). The odds of response were substantially higher with pre-notification (1.45; 95% CI 1.29 to 1.63; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 89\%$), follow-up contact (1.35; 95% CI 1.18 to 1.55; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 76\%$), unconditional incentives (1.61; 1.36 to 1.89; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 88\%$), shorter questionnaires (1.64; 95% CI 1.43 to 1.87; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 91\%$), providing a second copy of the questionnaire at follow up (1.46; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.90; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 82\%$), mentioning an obligation to respond (1.61; 95% CI 1.16 to 2.22; $P = 0.98$, $I^2 = 0\%$) and university sponsorship (1.32; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.54; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 83\%$). The odds of response were also increased with non-monetary incentives (1.15; 95% CI 1.08 to 1.22; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 79\%$), personalised questionnaires (1.14; 95% CI 1.07 to 1.22; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 63\%$), use of hand-written addresses (1.25; 95% CI 1.08 to 1.45; $P = 0.32$, $I^2 = 14\%$), use of stamped return envelopes as opposed to franked return envelopes (1.24; 95% CI 1.14 to 1.35; $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 69\%$), an assurance of confidentiality (1.33; 95% CI 1.24 to 1.42) and first class outward mailing (1.11; 95% CI 1.02 to 1.21; $P = 0.78$, $I^2 = 0\%$). The odds of response were reduced when the questionnaire included questions of a sensitive nature (0.94; 95% CI 0.88 to 1.00; $P = 0.51$, $I^2 = 0\%$).

Electronic

We found 32 eligible trials. The trials evaluated 27 different ways of increasing response to electronic questionnaires. We found substantial heterogeneity among trial results in half of the strategies. The odds of response were increased by more than a half using non-monetary incentives (1.72; 95% CI 1.09 to 2.72; heterogeneity $P < 0.00001$, $I^2 = 95\%$), shorter e-questionnaires (1.73; 1.40 to 2.13; $P = 0.08$, $I^2 = 68\%$), including a statement that others had responded (1.52; 95% CI 1.36 to 1.70), and a more interesting topic (1.85; 95% CI 1.52 to 2.26). The odds of response increased by a third using a lottery with immediate notification of results (1.37; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.65), an offer of survey results (1.36; 95% CI 1.15 to 1.61), and using a white background (1.31; 95% CI 1.10 to 1.56). The odds of response were also increased with personalised e-questionnaires (1.24; 95% CI 1.17 to 1.32; $P = 0.07$, $I^2 = 41\%$), using a simple header (1.23; 95% CI 1.03 to 1.48), using textual representation of response categories (1.19; 95% CI 1.05 to 1.36), and giving a deadline (1.18; 95% CI 1.03 to 1.34). The odds of response tripled when a picture was included in an e-mail (3.05; 95% CI 1.84 to 5.06; $P = 0.27$, $I^2 = 19\%$). The odds of response were reduced when "Survey" was mentioned in the e-mail subject line (0.81; 95% CI 0.67 to 0.97; $P = 0.33$, $I^2 = 0\%$), and when the e-mail included a male signature (0.55; 95% CI 0.38 to 0.80; $P = 0.96$, $I^2 = 0\%$).

Authors' conclusions

Health researchers using postal and electronic questionnaires can increase response using the strategies shown to be effective in this systematic review.

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Postal and electronic questionnaires are a relatively inexpensive way to collect information from people for research purposes. If people do not reply (so called 'non-responders'), the research results will tend to be less accurate. This systematic review found several ways to increase response. People can be contacted before they are sent a postal questionnaire. Postal questionnaires can be sent by first class post or recorded delivery, and a stamped-return envelope can be provided. Questionnaires, letters and e-mails can be made more personal, and preferably kept short. Incentives can be offered, for example, a small amount of money with a postal questionnaire. One or more reminders can be sent with a copy of the questionnaire to people who do not reply.

BACKGROUND

Postal questionnaires are widely used in the collection of data in epidemiological studies. When collecting information from large, geographically dispersed populations, the postal questionnaire is often the only financially viable option. Non-response to postal questionnaires reduces the effective sample size and can introduce bias ([Armstrong 1995](#)). Because non-response can affect the validity of epidemiological studies, assessment of response is an important dimension in the critical appraisal of health research. For the same reason, the identification of effective strategies to increase response to postal questionnaires could improve the quality of health research. We sought to identify such strategies by conducting a systematic review of randomised controlled trials.

OBJECTIVES

To quantify the effects of methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires.

METHODS

Criteria for considering studies for this review

Types of studies

All unconfounded randomised controlled trials of methods designed to increase response to postal or electronic questionnaires. A postal questionnaire was defined as a questionnaire that is delivered to a person's home or work address by a distribution system. This includes questionnaires delivered by any postal service including internal organisational mail and those hand delivered to a person's address. It does not include questionnaires distributed at, for example, a shop or in a doctor's office. The 2008 update to this review included randomised controlled trials of questionnaires distributed by electronic mail, and strategies designed to improve response to online or web surveys.

Types of data

Any population (e.g. patients or healthcare providers, and including any participants of non-health studies).

Types of methods

Any methods designed to increase response to postal or electronic questionnaires. Strategies requiring telephone contact as a follow-up technique are included but those requiring home visits are not.

Types of outcome measures

- Proportion of completed, or partially completed questionnaires returned after the first mailing.
- Proportion of completed, or partially completed questionnaires returned after all mailings.
- Proportion of participants logging-in, or clicking the hyperlink to visit the online survey.
- Proportion of participants submitting the online survey.

Search methods for identification of studies

We identified trials by searching 14 electronic bibliographic databases, the reference lists of all identified trials, reference lists of relevant meta-analyses, contacting the authors of included trials and by handsearching. **Full details of the search strategies used are included in [Appendix 1](#).**

Data collection and analysis

Trial identification

Two authors of this review examined the titles, abstracts and key words of all records identified from electronic bibliographic databases.

Quality assessment

Since the quality of allocation concealment affects the results of studies, two authors of the review scored quality on the scale used by Schulz ([Schulz 1995](#)) as shown below, assigning C to poorest quality and A to best quality:

A - trials deemed to have taken adequate measures to conceal allocation (i.e. central randomisation; computer-generated address labels; or other description that contained elements that would ensure concealment).

B - trials in which the authors either did not report an allocation concealment approach at all or reported an approach that did not fall into one of the other categories.

C - trials in which concealment was inadequate (such as alternation or reference to case record numbers or to dates of birth). Where the method used to conceal allocation was not clearly reported, the author was contacted, if possible, for clarification. We then compared the scores allocated and resolved differences by discussion.

Data extraction

Two authors of this review independently extracted data from eligible reports using a standard proforma, with disagreements resolved by a third author of the review. We extracted data on the

type of intervention evaluated, the number randomised to intervention or control groups, the quality of allocation concealment, and the types of participants, materials and follow-up methods used. Two outcomes were used to estimate the effect of each intervention on response: the proportion of questionnaires returned after the first mailing and the proportion returned after all follow-up contacts were complete. We wrote to the authors of reports where information was missing. We excluded trials in which we could not confirm that random allocation had been used to allocate participants.

Analysis

We classified and analysed interventions were classified and analysed under broad strategies to increase questionnaire response. In trials with factorial designs, we classified interventions under two or more strategies. When interventions were evaluated at more than two levels (e.g. highly, moderately and slightly personalised questionnaires), we combined the upper levels, creating a dichotomy. For example, we compared response to the least personalised questionnaire with the combined response for the moderately and highly personalised questionnaires. Monetary incentives were defined as any incentive that could be used by participants as money (i.e. cash or cheques). Incentives such as a donation to charity, or entrance into a lottery, were classified as 'non-monetary' incentives.

We made additional data analyses using STATA statistical software (StataCorp 1999). For each strategy, we estimated pooled odds ratios using a random-effects model. We calculated 95% confidence intervals and two-sided P values for each outcome. We assessed evidence for selection bias using Egger's weighted regression method and Begg's rank correlation test and funnel plot. We assessed heterogeneity among trial odds ratios using a Chi² test at a 5% significance level and the degree of inconsistency between trial results was quantified using the I² statistic, as proposed by Higgins and Thompson (2002). The I² statistic measures the percentage of variation across studies that is due to heterogeneity.

RESULTS

Description of studies

Postal

We identified 481 eligible trials that evaluated 110 different strategies for increasing response to postal questionnaires. There were 75 strategies for which the trials included over 1000 participants.

Electronic

We identified 32 eligible trials that evaluated 27 different strategies for increasing response to electronic questionnaires. There were 20 strategies for which the trials included over 1000 participants. See the table 'Characteristics of included studies' for further details.

Risk of bias in included studies

The method of randomisation was not known in the majority of eligible trials. Where information was available, the quality of allocation concealment was classified as C (inadequate) in 76 trials and as A (adequate) in 83 trials. The remaining trials were classified as B (unclear).

Effect of methods

Incentives - What are participants offered? (Strategies 1 - 11)

Postal

Ninety-four trials (160,004 participants) evaluated the effect of a monetary incentive on questionnaire response. The odds of response were almost doubled using monetary incentives (odds ratio (OR) 1.87; 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.73 to 2.03). There was, however, significant heterogeneity among the trial results ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 1.2). Thirty-seven trials (84,043 participants) evaluated the effect of a larger rather than a smaller monetary incentive on questionnaire response. The odds of response were a quarter higher when a larger monetary incentive was used (OR 1.26; 95% CI 1.14 to 1.39) (Analysis 2.2). Thirteen trials (26,484 participants) evaluated the effect of offering a monetary rather than a non-monetary incentive on questionnaire response. The odds of response were increased by over a half when a monetary incentive rather than a non-monetary incentive was used (OR 95% CI 1.62; 1.39 to 1.88). There was significant heterogeneity among the trial results ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 3.2).

Ninety-four trials (135,934 participants) evaluated the effect of a non-monetary incentive (e.g. key ring, lottery participation, offer of study results, etc.) on questionnaire response. The odds of response were increased by over a tenth when a non-monetary incentive was used (OR 1.15; 95% CI 1.08 to 1.22). There was significant heterogeneity among the results of non-monetary incentive trials ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 4.2). Seven trials (10,730 participants) evaluated the effect of a larger rather than a smaller non-monetary incentive on questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a larger non-monetary incentive (OR 1.09; 95% CI 0.97 to 1.22) (Analysis 5.2).

Twenty-four trials (27,569 participants) evaluated the timing of incentives on questionnaire response. The odds of response increased by more than a half when incentives were given with questionnaires rather than only given after participants had returned their questionnaires (OR 1.61; 95% CI 1.36 to 1.89). There was significant heterogeneity among the trial results ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 8.2). Three trials (7924 participants) evaluated the effect of offering an incentive with the first rather than a subsequent mailing. The odds of response were increased by over a tenth when the incentive was offered with the first mailing (OR 1.14; 95% CI 1.02 to 1.28) (Analysis 9.2). Twelve trials (15,256 participants) evaluated the effect of offering survey results as an incentive. There was no evidence for an effect on response of offering the study results (OR 0.90; 95% CI 0.76 to 1.07) (Analysis 11.2).

Electronic

One trial (1102 participants) evaluated the effect of a monetary incentive on electronic questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using monetary incentives (OR 1.19; 95% CI 0.82 to 1.75) (Analysis 1.4). Six trials (17,493 participants) evaluated the effect of a non-monetary incentive (e.g. Amazon gift cards, lottery participation, personal digital assistant, early grade feedback, etc.) on e-questionnaire response. The odds of response were almost doubled when a non-monetary incentive was used (OR 1.72; 95% CI 1.09 to 2.72) (Analysis 4.4). Seven trials (31,454 participants) evaluated the effect of a larger rather than a smaller non-monetary incentive on e-questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a larger non-monetary incentive (OR 0.95; 95% CI 0.78 to 1.15) (Analysis 5.4). Two trials (2856 participants) evaluated the effect of a monetary rather than a non-monetary incentive on e-questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a monetary rather than non-monetary incentive (OR 0.77; 95% CI 0.48 to 1.23) (Analysis 3.4).

One trial (2233 participants) evaluated the effect of immediate notification of lottery results compared to delayed notification on e-questionnaire response. The odds of response were increased by almost a half when lottery results were immediately notified (OR 1.37; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.65) (Analysis 6.4). Two trials (4721 participants) evaluated the effect of higher denominations of currencies in a monetary lottery compared to lower denominations on e-questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of offering higher denominations in a monetary lottery (OR 1.00; 95% CI 0.87 to 1.14) (Analysis 7.4).

Three trials (1401 participants) evaluated the timing of incentives on e-questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response when incentives were given with questionnaires rather than only given after participants had submitted their e-questionnaires (OR 1.08; 95% CI 0.77 to 1.50) (Analysis 8.4). One trial (1061 participants) evaluated the combined effect of conditional and unconditional incentives compared to conditional incentives alone. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using the

combined incentives (OR 1.19; 95% CI 0.92 to 1.54) (Analysis 10.4). A single trial (2332 participants) evaluated the effect of offering survey results as an incentive. The odds of response increased by almost a half when offer of results was used (OR 1.36; 95% CI 1.15 to 1.61) (Analysis 11.4).

Length - How long is the questionnaire? (Strategies 12 & 13)

Postal

Fifty-six trials (60,119 participants), including two unpublished trials, evaluated the effect of questionnaire length on response. The odds of response increased by more than a half using shorter questionnaires (OR 1.64; 95% CI 1.43 to 1.87). Heterogeneity among trial results was apparent on inspection of the forest plot and Chi² test result ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 12.2). One trial (600 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using a double postcard compared to one page. The odds ratio decreased by a half when a double postcard was used (OR 0.47; 95% CI 0.34 to 0.66) (Analysis 13.2).

Electronic

Two trials (7589 participants) evaluated the effect of the length of e-questionnaire on response. The odds of response increased by over a half when using shorter e-questionnaires (OR 1.73; 95% CI 1.40 to 2.13) (Analysis 12.4).

Appearance - How does the questionnaire look? (Strategies 14 - 43)

Postal

Fifty-eight trials (60,184 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of making questionnaire materials more personal, such as signing letters by hand. The odds of response were increased by more than a tenth with a more personalised approach to participants (OR 1.14; 95% CI 1.07 to 1.22). There was, however, significant heterogeneity among the results of these trials ($P < 0.0001$) (Analysis 14.2). Fourteen trials (15,006 participants) evaluated the effect of cover letters bearing a hand-written signature compared to those that are typed or scanned or printed. The odds of response increased by a quarter using hand-written signatures (OR 1.24; 95% CI 1.08 to 1.41) (Analysis 15.2). Seven trials (5091 participants) evaluated the effect of hand-written address label compared to computer-printed label. The odds of response increased by a quarter when using the hand-written labelled questionnaire (OR 1.25; 95% CI 1.08 to 1.45) (Analysis 16.2). Two trials (1030 participants) evaluated the presence of a signature within the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a signature within the questionnaire (OR 1.34;

95% CI 0.97 to 1.85) (Analysis 17.2). Eight trials (4134 participants) evaluated the effect of including an identifying feature, such as a participant's name or identity number, on questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using an identifying feature (OR 1.12; 95% CI 0.82 to 1.52) (Analysis 18.2).

Five trials (8637 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using brown envelopes compared to white. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using brown envelope (OR 1.23; 95% CI 0.81 to 1.87) (Analysis 20.2). Fourteen trials (41,421 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using questionnaires printed on coloured paper. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using coloured questionnaire (OR 1.04; 95% CI 0.99 to 1.10) (Analysis 21.2). Three trials (7040 participants) evaluated the effect of using coloured ink, compared with black or blue ink, on questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using coloured ink (OR 1.16; 95% CI 0.95 to 1.42) (Analysis 22.2). Two trials (2356 participants) evaluated the effect of a coloured letterhead compared to a black and white letterhead. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a coloured letterhead (OR 1.08; 95% CI 0.91 to 1.28) (Analysis 23.2). A single trial (320 participants) evaluated the effect of an illustration on the cover of the questionnaire largely in black, versus largely in white. The odds of response increased by more than a half when using an illustration on the cover of the questionnaire that was largely in black (OR 1.62; 95% CI 1.04 to 2.53) (Analysis 24.2).

Three trials (5681 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a booklet compared to stapled pages. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a booklet (OR 1.10; 95% CI 0.99 to 1.23) (Analysis 25.2). Two trials (2145 participants) evaluated the effect of the paper size of the questionnaire on response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a large paper size (OR 0.88; 95% CI 0.56 to 1.39) (Analysis 26.2). A single trial (176 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of printing the questionnaire using dot matrix compared to a letter-quality print. There was no evidence for an effect of response of using the dot matrix print (OR 1.15; 95% CI 0.63 to 2.10) (Analysis 27.2). Two trials (1039 participants) evaluated the effect of the questionnaire being printed on a high quality or thicker paper, compared to standard quality or thin paper. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a high quality or a thicker paper (OR 0.80; 95% CI 0.60 to 1.06) (Analysis 28.2). Four trials (4966 participants) evaluated the effect of using a single-sided questionnaire compared to a double-sided questionnaire. The odds of response increased by almost a quarter when a single-sided questionnaire was used (OR 1.22; 95% CI 1.01 to 1.47) (Analysis 29.2). One trial (650 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a larger font compared to a smaller font. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using larger font (OR 1.26; 95% CI 0.87 to 1.82) (Analysis 30.2).

A single trial (1000 participants) compared the presence of study

logo on several items in the mailing package to its presence in the questionnaire only. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using study logo on several items in the mailing package (OR 0.92; 95% CI 0.72 to 1.18) (Analysis 31.2). Four trials (3710 participants) evaluated the effect of the presence of a picture in the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a picture (OR 1.07; 95% CI 0.76 to 1.53) (Analysis 32.2). One trial (280 participants) evaluated the effect on response of including a cartoon in the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response of including a cartoon (OR 1.00; 95% CI 0.62 to 1.62) (Analysis 34.2). Two trials (316 participants) evaluated the effect of using a questionnaire in matrix form compared to standard form. There was no evidence for an effect on response using the matrix form (OR 0.58; 95% CI 0.29 to 1.16) (Analysis 35.2). One trial (259 participants) evaluated the effect on response of questions ordered by time period compared to those not ordered by time period. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using questionnaires where questions are ordered by time period (OR 1.48; 95% CI 0.84 to 2.59) (Analysis 36.3).

Electronic

Twelve trials (48,910 participants) evaluated the effect on e-questionnaire response by addressing the salutations in the cover letters accompanying the questionnaires personally, or by giving a touch of personalisation to the cover letters. The odds of response were increased by about a quarter when personalised approach was adopted (OR 1.24; 95% CI 1.17 to 1.32) (Analysis 14.4). Two trials (720 participants) evaluated the effect of the presence of a picture in the e-mail. The odds of response tripled when a picture was sent in the e-mail (OR 3.05; 95% CI 1.84 to 5.06) (Analysis 32.4). The same trials (520 participants) evaluated the effect of response when a more attractive picture was used compared to a less attractive picture. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a more attractive picture (OR 3.44; 95% CI 0.72 to 16.49) (Analysis 33.4).

Two trials (6152 participants) evaluated the presence of a topic in the subject line of the e-mail compared to a blank subject line. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a topic in the subject line (OR 0.84; 95% CI 0.71 to 1.01) (Analysis 37.2). Two trials (3845 participants) evaluated the presence of "Survey" as the subject line compared to a blank subject line. The odds of response decreased by a fifth when "Survey" was mentioned in the subject line (OR 0.81; 95% CI 0.67 to 0.97) (Analysis 38.2). One trial (6090 participants) evaluated the effect of sending the e-mails in text file formats compared to HTML. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using text file format (OR 1.00; 95% CI 0.84 to 1.19) (Analysis 39.2). The same trial (6090 participants) evaluated the presence of using a white background in the e-mail compared to a black background. The odds of response increased by over a quarter when a white background was used (OR 1.31; 95% CI 1.10 to 1.56) (Analysis 40.2).

One trial (6090 participants) evaluated the effect of including a header compared to no header in the e-mail. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a header (OR 1.13; 95% CI 0.90 to 1.41) ([Analysis 41.2](#)). The same trial (5075 participants) evaluated the effect of a simple header compared to a complex header. The odds of response increased by almost a quarter when a simple header was used (OR 1.23; 95% CI 1.03 to 1.48) ([Analysis 42.2](#)). One trial (5413 participants) evaluated the effect of textual presentation of response categories compared to visual presentation of response categories. The odds of response increased by almost a fifth when textual presentation was used (OR 1.19; 95% CI 1.05 to 1.36) ([Analysis 43.4](#)).

Delivery - How are the questionnaires received or returned? (Strategies 44 - 60)

Postal

Six trials (13,964 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using stamps on out-going envelopes compared to franked envelopes. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using stamps on outgoing envelopes (OR 0.95; 95% CI 0.88 to 1.03) ([Analysis 44.2](#)). Two trials (8300 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using first class compared to other classes of postage. The odds of response were increased by over one-tenth using first class postage (OR 1.11; 95% CI 1.02 to 1.21) ([Analysis 45.2](#)). Five trials (5461 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using commemorative stamps rather than standard stamps on return envelopes. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using commemorative stamps (OR 0.92; 95% CI 0.81 to 1.06) ([Analysis 46.2](#)). Fifteen trials (18,931 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using a special delivery service (including recorded, registered and certified delivery), rather than standard delivery. The odds of response increased by more than a half when special delivery was used (OR 1.76; 95% CI 1.43 to 2.18). Results were significantly heterogeneous ($P < 0.00001$) ([Analysis 47.2](#)).

Twenty-seven trials (48,612 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using a stamped return envelope compared to a pre-paid business or franked reply envelope. The odds of response increased by a quarter when stamps were used (OR 1.24; 95% CI 1.14 to 1.35). There was significant heterogeneity between the trial results ($P < 0.001$) ([Analysis 48.2](#)). One trial (205 participants) evaluated the effect of using priority stamps on return envelopes compared to using a first class stamp. The odds of response decreased by more than a half when priority stamps were used (OR 0.26; 95% CI 0.14 to 0.46) ([Analysis 49.2](#)). One trial (800 participants) evaluated the effect of using a first class stamp on return envelopes compared to a second class stamp. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using first class stamp on return envelope (OR 0.91; 95% CI 0.69 to 1.21) ([Analysis 50.2](#)).

A single trial (510 participants) evaluated the use of multiple stamps on return envelopes compared to a single stamp. The odds of response increased by almost a half when multiple stamps were used (OR 1.44; 95% CI 1.01 to 2.04) ([Analysis 51.2](#)). Four trials (4094 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of providing any sort of pre-paid return envelope rather than none. There was no evidence for an effect on response of including pre-paid envelopes (OR 1.09; 95% CI 0.71 to 1.68). There was significant heterogeneity among the trial results ($P < 0.0001$) ([Analysis 53.2](#)). A single trial (147 participants) evaluated the effect of stamped addressed return envelopes compared to only including an address label. In this trial there was no evidence for an effect on response of using a stamped addressed return envelope (OR 0.86; 95% CI 0.45 to 1.65) ([Analysis 54.2](#)).

Two trials (1140 participants) evaluated the effect on response of sending questionnaires to the participant's work address rather than to their home address. There was no evidence for an effect on response of sending questionnaires to work addresses (OR 1.16; 95% CI 0.89 to 1.52) ([Analysis 52.2](#)). Two trials (11,781 participants) evaluated the effect of using a window envelope on questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using window envelopes (OR 0.96; 95% CI 0.61 to 1.49) ([Analysis 56.2](#)). A single trial (1200 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of sending the questionnaire in a larger envelope compared to a standard or smaller envelope. There was no evidence for an effect of response of using larger envelopes (OR 0.93; 95% CI 0.74 to 1.17) ([Analysis 55.2](#)). A single trial (4213 participants) evaluated the effect of providing optional Internet response along with the traditional postal response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of providing optional Internet response (OR 0.93; 95% CI 0.82 to 1.05) ([Analysis 57.2](#)). One trial (504) evaluated the effect of questionnaires being mailed on Monday compared to being sent on Friday. There was no evidence for an effect on response of sending the questionnaire on Monday (OR 0.83; 95% CI 0.58 to 1.17) ([Analysis 58.2](#)). One trial (460 participants) evaluated the effect of a questionnaire being received on a Monday, compared to being received on a Friday. There was no evidence for an effect on response of questionnaires being received on a Monday (OR 1.00; 95% CI 0.64 to 1.56) ([Analysis 59.2](#)). Two trials (2324 participants) evaluated the effect on response of questionnaires being sent one to five weeks after discharge from hospital, compared to being sent after 9 to 14 weeks. There was no evidence for an effect on response of questionnaires being sent sooner after discharge from hospital (OR 2.26; 95% CI 0.69 to 7.37) ([Analysis 60.2](#)).

Contact - Methods and number of requests for participation (Strategies 61 - 68)

Postal

Forty-seven trials (79,651 participants) evaluated the effect on response of contacting participants before sending questionnaires. The odds of response were increased by a half when participants were pre-notified (OR 1.45; 95% CI 1.29 to 1.63). There was significant heterogeneity among the trial results ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 61.2). Seven trials (3322 participants) evaluated the effect on response of pre-notification by telephone compared to by post. There was no evidence for an effect on response when participants were pre-contacted by telephone instead of by post (OR 1.18; 95% CI 0.77 to 1.80) (Analysis 62.2).

Nineteen trials (32,778 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of follow-up contact (e.g. repeat mailings or telephone calls) with participants who do not respond to the initial questionnaire. The odds of response increased by more than a quarter when follow-up contact was used (OR 1.35; 95% CI 1.18 to 1.55). There was significant heterogeneity among the results and both Begg's and Egger's tests indicated evidence of selection bias (Analysis 63.2). Eleven trials (8619 participants) evaluated the effect on response of providing participants with another copy of the questionnaire during postal follow up. The odds of response were increased by a half when questionnaires were included during postal follow up (OR 1.46; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.90). There was significant heterogeneity among these results ($P < 0.00001$) (Analysis 64.2).

Five trials (2254 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using telephone rather than postal follow up. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using telephone follow up (OR 0.86; 95% CI 0.54 to 1.36) (Analysis 65.2). Three trials (13,922 participants) evaluated the effect on response of a telephone reminder compared to no reminder. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a telephone reminder (OR 1.29; 95% CI 0.85 to 1.96) (Analysis 66.2). Three trials (9947 participants) evaluated the effect of an SMS reminder compared to a postcard reminder. The odds of response increased by half when an SMS reminder was used (OR 1.49; 95% CI 1.23 to 1.81) (Analysis 67.2).

Two trials (1608 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using a follow-up interval of less than 31 days compared to a follow-up interval of 31 to 60 days. There was no evidence for an effect on response when a follow-up interval of less than 31 days was used (OR 0.97; 95% CI 0.75 to 1.26) (Analysis 68.2).

Content - Nature and style of questions (Strategies 69 - 93)

Postal

Ten trials (21,393 participants) evaluated the effect on response of including a 'sensitive' question in a questionnaire. The odds of response were reduced by nearly one-tenth when sensitive questions were included (OR 0.94; 95% CI 0.88 to 1.00) (Analysis

69.2). A single trial (5817 participants) evaluated the effect on response of placing the more relevant questions at the start of the questionnaire. The odds of response were increased by a quarter when more relevant questions were placed first (OR 1.23; 95% CI 1.10 to 1.37) (Analysis 70.2). Three trials (11,435 participants) evaluated the effect on response of placing the most general questions at the start of the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response of placing general questions first (OR 0.95; 95% CI 0.83 to 1.09) (Analysis 71.2).

Four trials (3598 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of placing questions asking for demographic information first. There was no evidence for an effect on response of placing demographic items first (OR 1.08; 95% CI 0.94 to 1.25) (Analysis 72.2). Two trials (3182 participants) evaluated the effect on response of placing the easiest questions at the start of the questionnaire. The odds of response were increased by over a half when the easiest questions were presented first (OR 1.61; 95% CI 1.14 to 2.26) (Analysis 73.2).

A single trial (3540 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a more 'user-friendly' questionnaire. The odds of response were increased by almost a half using user-friendly questionnaires (OR 1.46; 95% CI 1.21 to 1.75) (Analysis 74.2). Three trials (2711 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a more 'interesting' or high salient questionnaire (e.g. asking questions particularly relevant to the study participants). The odds of response were doubled using more interesting questionnaires (OR 2.00; 95% CI 1.32 to 3.04) (Analysis 75.2).

Three trials (1764 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using open-ended rather than closed questions. The odds of response were reduced by more than half when open-ended questions were used (OR 0.31; 95% CI 0.09 to 1.04) (Analysis 76.2). One trial (300 participants) evaluated the effect of using open-ended items first compared to other items first. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using open-ended items first (OR 1.26; 95% CI 0.73 to 2.19) (Analysis 77.2). One trial (300 participants) evaluated the effect of using closed-ended items first compared to other items first. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using closed-ended items first (OR 0.93; 95% CI 0.54 to 1.59) (Analysis 78.2).

A single trial (1360 participants) evaluated the effect on response of including 'don't know' boxes for questions. There was no evidence for an effect on response of including 'don't know' boxes (OR 1.03; 95% CI 0.82 to 1.29) (Analysis 79.2). Two trials (1125 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a circle answer rather than tick box format on question responses. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a circle answer format (OR 0.96; 95% CI 0.74 to 1.26) (Analysis 80.2). A single trial (6783 participants) evaluated the effect of listing response options in increasing order on questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of listing response options in increasing order (OR 1.06; 95% CI 0.94 to 1.18) (Analysis 81.2).

Two trials (3882 participants) evaluated the effect on response of

using high frequency response alternatives compared to medium frequency response alternatives. There was no evidence for an effect on response when high frequency response alternatives were used (OR 1.40; 95% CI 0.58 to 3.38) ([Analysis 82.2](#)). Another trial (654 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of using a 5-step response scale compared to a 10-step response scale. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a 5-step response scale (OR 0.78; 95% CI 0.52 to 1.19) ([Analysis 83.2](#)).

A single trial (1500 participants) evaluated the effect of using an individual-item rather than a stem-and-leaf format on questionnaire response. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using individual item format (OR 0.88; 95% CI 0.70 to 1.10) ([Analysis 85.2](#)). One trial (400 participants), evaluated the horizontal orientation of response options compared to vertical orientation of response options. The odds of response tripled when horizontal orientation was used (OR 3.12; 95% CI 1.63 to 5.96) ([Analysis 86.2](#)). Four trials (7345 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using conventional mode of response technique compared to randomised response technique. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using the conventional mode of response technique (OR 1.52; 95% CI 0.85 to 2.72) ([Analysis 87.2](#)).

A single trial (1280 participants) evaluated the effect on response of asking 'factual' questions only compared to factual and attitudinal questions. The odds of response were increased by more than a quarter using factual questions only (OR 1.34; 95% CI 1.01 to 1.77) ([Analysis 88.2](#)). One trial (190 participants) evaluated the effect of including a teaser on the envelope. The odds of response increased by over three times when a teaser was used (OR 3.08; 95% CI 1.27 to 7.44) ([Analysis 89.2](#)).

A single trial (1795 participants) evaluated the effect of sending the questionnaire with a supplement compared to sending the questionnaire alone. There was no evidence for an effect on response of sending questionnaire with a supplement (OR 0.86; 95% CI 0.70 to 1.07) ([Analysis 90.2](#)). Two trials (4943 participants) evaluated the effect on response of including a questionnaire for relatives. The odds of response were reduced by one third when a questionnaire for relatives was included (OR 0.67; 95% CI 0.60 to 0.76) ([Analysis 91.2](#)). One trial (414 participants) evaluated the effect of including a consent form with the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response of including a consent form (OR 1.32; 95% CI 0.89 to 1.95) ([Analysis 92.2](#)). Another trial (200 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a multi-option consent form compared to a standard consent form. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using a multi-option consent form (OR 0.91; 95% CI 0.49 to 1.68) ([Analysis 93.2](#)).

Electronic

One trial (2176 participants) evaluated the effect on response of using a more 'interesting' e-questionnaire (e.g. asking questions

particularly relevant to the study participants). The odds of response were almost doubled using a more interesting e-questionnaire (OR 1.85; 95% CI 1.52 to 2.26) ([Analysis 75.4](#)).

Origin - Who sent the questionnaire? (Strategies 94 - 100)

Postal

Fourteen trials (21,628 participants) evaluated the effect on response of university sponsorship. The odds of response were increased by more than a quarter when questionnaires originated from a university rather than an alternative source, such as a government department or commercial organisation (OR 1.32; 95% CI 1.13 to 1.54). There was significant heterogeneity between trial results ($P < 0.00001$) ([Analysis 94.2](#)). Ten trials (5644 participants) evaluated the effect on response when questionnaires were sent or signed by a more senior or well-known person. There was no evidence for an effect on response when a more senior or well-known person sent or signed the questionnaire (OR 1.05; 95% CI 0.89 to 1.23) ([Analysis 95.2](#)).

A single trial (500 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of sending the questionnaire in a university printed envelope. There was no evidence for an effect on response of sending the questionnaire in a university printed envelope (OR 0.88; 95% CI 0.61 to 1.28) ([Analysis 96.2](#)). Two trials (924 participants) evaluated the effect on response of pre-contact by a medical researcher compared to a non medical researcher. There was no evidence for an effect on response of pre-contact by a medical researcher (OR 1.01; 95% CI 0.55 to 1.86) ([Analysis 97.2](#)). Two trials (1106 participants) evaluated the effect on response when questionnaires were sent from a GP rather than a research group. There was no evidence for an effect on response of sending questionnaires by a GP (OR 1.52; 95% CI 0.73 to 3.15) ([Analysis 98.2](#)).

Five trials (5959 participants) evaluated the effect on response of whether the ethnicity of the name of the person sending the questionnaire was identifiable. There was no evidence for an effect on response when names were ethnically identifiable (OR 1.07; 95% CI 0.90 to 1.27) ([Analysis 99.2](#)). Two trials (3146 participants) evaluated the effect of sending the questionnaire by a male investigator compared to a female investigator. There was no evidence for an effect on response of sending the questionnaire by a male investigator (OR 1.07; 95% CI 0.72 to 1.58) ([Analysis 100.2](#)).

Electronic

Two trials (3845 participants) evaluated the effect on e-questionnaire response of university sponsorship. There was no evidence for an effect on e-questionnaire response of using the university sponsorship (OR 0.84; 95% CI 0.69 to 1.01) ([Analysis 94.4](#)). Two trials (720 participants) evaluated the effect of sending the e-questionnaire signed by a male compared to that signed by a female.

The odds of response decreased by over a half when the e-questionnaire was signed by a male (OR 0.55; 95% CI 0.38 to 0.80) (Analysis 100.4). Three trials (23,027 participants) evaluated the effect on response when e-questionnaires were sent or signed by a more senior or well-known person. There was no evidence for an effect on response when a more senior or well-known person sent or signed the e-questionnaire (OR 1.05; 95% CI 0.95 to 1.15) (Analysis 95.4).

Communication - What are participants told? (Strategies 101 - 121)

Postal

One trial (25,000 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of providing participants with an assurance of confidentiality. The odds of response were increased by more than a quarter with an assurance of confidentiality (OR 1.33; 95% CI 1.24 to 1.42) (Analysis 101.2). One trial (468 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of including a statement that others had responded. There was no evidence for an effect on response when the statement was included (OR 1.12; 95% CI 0.76 to 1.65) (Analysis 102.2). Four trials (3555 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of offering participants the choice to opt-out from the study. There was no evidence for an effect on response when participants could opt-out (OR 0.92; 95% CI 0.66 to 1.28) (Analysis 103.2).

A single trial (2000 participants) evaluated the effect on response of providing instructions for completion of the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response when instructions were given (OR 0.89; 95% CI 0.74 to 1.06) (Analysis 104.2). Six trials (5661 participants) evaluated the effect on response of giving participants a deadline by which to respond. There was no evidence for an effect on response of giving deadlines (OR 1.00; 95% CI 0.84 to 1.19) (Analysis 105.2). Three trials (600 participants) evaluated the effect on response of mention of an obligation to respond compared to no mention of an obligation to respond. The odds of response increased by more than half with the mention of an obligation to respond (OR 1.61; 95% CI 1.16 to 2.22) (Analysis 106.2).

One trial (702 participants) evaluated the effect on response of questionnaires including a request for a telephone number. There was no evidence for an effect on response of requesting a telephone number (OR 1.00; 95% CI 0.65 to 1.54) (Analysis 107.2). One trial (200 participants) evaluated the effect of asking participants to respond on questionnaire itself compared to asking them to respond on a separate form. There was no evidence for an effect on response of asking the participants to respond on the questionnaire (OR 1.13; 95% CI 0.57 to 2.27) (Analysis 108.2).

Seven trials (7053 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of telling participants that they would be contacted again if they did not respond. There was no evidence for an effect

on response of questionnaire if mention of follow up was used (OR 1.02; 95% CI 0.91 to 1.15) (Analysis 109.2). Two trials (1907 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of requesting an explanation for non-participation. There was no evidence for an effect on response of requesting an explanation for non-participation (OR 1.14; 95% CI 0.83 to 1.57) (Analysis 110.2).

One trial (600 participants) evaluated the effect on response of providing a time estimate for completion of the questionnaire. There was no evidence for an effect on response when a time estimation was provided (OR 1.10; 95% CI 0.76 to 1.58) (Analysis 111.2). Another trial (500 participants) evaluated the effect on response of a detailed cover letter compared to a brief cover letter. There was no evidence for an effect on response in using the detailed cover letter (OR 1.08; 95% CI 0.74 to 1.58) (Analysis 112.2). Two trials (1251 participants) evaluated the effect on response of the presence of an appeal or a pleading factor in the cover letter. There was no evidence for an effect on response of using an appeal (OR 1.06; 95% CI 0.79 to 1.42) (Analysis 113.2). A small trial (100 participants) evaluated the effect of a note requesting participants not to remove an ID Code. The odds of response decreased by more than a half when the note was added (OR 0.37; 95% CI 0.14 to 0.96) (Analysis 114.2).

A single trial (201 participants) evaluated the effect on response of a request for the participant's signature. There was no evidence for an effect on response when requesting participants' signatures (OR 1.19; 95% CI 0.65 to 2.18) (Analysis 115.2). One trial (395 participants) evaluated the effect of endorsing the questionnaire by eminent professionals in the field. The odds of response decreased by more than a quarter when an endorsement was used (OR 0.63; 95% CI 0.43 to 0.94) (Analysis 116.2). One trial (671 participants) evaluated the effect of a veiled threat in follow-up letters. The odds of response doubled when a veiled threat was used (OR 2.09; 95% CI 1.49 to 2.93) (Analysis 117.2).

Eight trials (10,908 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of stressing how response would benefit the sponsor. There was no evidence for an effect on response when stressing the benefits to the sponsor (OR 0.99; 95% CI 0.86 to 1.13). There was significant heterogeneity between trial results and both Begg's and Egger's tests indicated evidence of selection bias (Analysis 118.2). Nine trials (13,175 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of stressing how response would benefit the participant. There was no evidence for an effect on response when stressing the benefits to participants (OR 0.98; 95% CI 0.82 to 1.16) (Analysis 119.2). Ten trials (12,731 participants) evaluated the effect on questionnaire response of stressing how response would benefit society. There was no evidence for an effect on response of stressing the benefits to society (OR 1.09; 95% CI 0.92 to 1.29). Again, there was significant heterogeneity between trial results and both Begg's and Egger's tests indicated evidence of selection bias (Analysis 120.2). Two trials (2070 participants) evaluated the effect on response of questionnaires remaining anonymous.

mous compared with being identifiable. There was no evidence for an effect on response of questionnaires remaining anonymous (OR 0.96; 95% CI 0.66 to 1.39) ([Analysis 121.2](#)).

Electronic

One trial (8586 participants) evaluated the effect on e-questionnaire response of including a statement that others had responded. The odds of response increased by half when the statement was included (OR 1.52; 95% CI 1.36 to 1.70) ([Analysis 102.4](#)). A single trial (8586 participants) evaluated the effect on e-questionnaire response of giving participants a deadline by which to respond. The odds of response increased by over a tenth when giving a deadline (OR 1.18; 95% CI 1.03 to 1.34) ([Analysis 105.4](#)). Two trials (3844 participants) evaluated the effect of including an appeal, such as "request for help" in the subject line of the e-mail. There was no evidence for an effect on response of including an appeal in the subject line (OR 0.84; 95% CI 0.70 to 1.01) ([Analysis 113.4](#)).

DISCUSSION

Many reviews and meta-analyses of strategies to increase response to postal questionnaires have appeared in the survey research literature over the last forty years. However, none was based on a systematic search of the published and unpublished literature and in particular they did not include the medical literature. The most comprehensive of these included 115 trials ([Yammarino 1991](#)), less than half the number of trials included in our review.

We have identified a range of strategies that increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires. The pooled intervention effects for some strategies are precise due to the large numbers of participants randomised in the combined trials. Before interpreting and applying the results of this review several methodological issues must be considered.

The identification and inclusion of all relevant trials in systematic reviews reduces random error in meta-analyses and, because ease of identification of trials is associated with treatment effects, complete ascertainment may also reduce bias ([Clarke 1994](#)). We excluded some trials because we could not confirm that participants had been randomly allocated to intervention and control groups and have not examined whether the results of these trials differ systematically from the included trials. Although tests for selection bias were significant in five strategies, these results may be due to true heterogeneity between trial results, rather than bias in the selection of trials ([Egger 1997](#)).

Inadequate allocation concealment can bias the results of clinical trials ([Schulz 1995](#)). In our review, information on allocation concealment was unavailable for most of the included trials. If they were inadequately concealed, this may have biased the results.

It may be inappropriate to combine heterogeneous trial results to produce a single estimate of effect ([Engels 2000](#)). We found substantial heterogeneity among trial results in half of the strategies, and for these, the pooled odds ratios may not be meaningful. Variation between trial interventions and populations is likely to explain some of the heterogeneity. For example, among trials evaluating non-monetary incentives, the types of incentive used are considerably heterogeneous including things such as donations to charity, lottery participation and free key rings or pens. Among trials evaluating monetary incentives, the amounts of money offered to participants vary between trials. A meta-regression analysis has shown that monetary incentives can increase response to postal questionnaires but that the relation between the amount of money and response is not linear ([Edwards 2005](#)).

Among the trials evaluating shorter and longer questionnaires, the lengths of the questionnaires used varies between trials, some comparing one page with a two page alternative, and others comparing four or more pages with longer alternatives. In a meta-regression analysis, most of the heterogeneity was explained by variation in the length of the questionnaires used in each trial ([Edwards 2004](#)). A subgroup analysis of the trials of personalisation in postal questionnaires found that response was increased by addressing participants by name on cover letters, and that the effect appears to be enhanced by including hand-written signatures ([Scott 2006](#)).

Further analyses may reveal important sources of variation, for example, due to methodological quality, questionnaire topic, study age, or type of population. In this review, our aim was to systematically identify and critically appraise eligible trials, and to present the relevant data. We did not intend to produce single effect estimates for every strategy. For many strategies, although there is statistical heterogeneity, the directions of the effects were similar. For these strategies we cannot be sure about the size of the effect, but we can be reasonably confident that there was an effect on response.

We have chosen to use odds ratios in our analyses for methodological reasons. However, the practical implication of the odds ratio for a strategy is difficult to interpret without knowing the baseline response rate (without the strategy). Moreover, the odds ratio for a strategy might vary in relationship to the baseline response rate. Therefore, those conducting postal and electronic surveys should scrutinise the data in the relevant results tables closely if the magnitude of the effect that they might expect from using a specific strategy is an important consideration for them in deciding whether or not to use the strategy. A table showing the conversion of odds ratios to response proportions for a range of different baselines is included in [Appendix 2](#).

AUTHORS' CONCLUSIONS

Implication for methodological research

The results of this review show that questionnaire length has a substantial impact on non-response, particularly when questionnaires are very short. In the context of outcome data collection in a clinical trial, the use of a short questionnaire would be expected to minimise non-response, thus increasing the effective sample size and reducing sampling error. However, if the use of short questionnaires reduces the accuracy of the measurement process, the reduction in random error achieved by increased follow up would have to be traded-off against increased random error due to using less precise measurement. Further research is required to quantify this trade-off, so that outcome measures can be designed for use in clinical trials that minimise total random error (sampling error and measurement error).

This review examined the effectiveness of 121 different strategies to increase the response to postal and electronic questionnaires. The outcome of interest in this review was the overall response proportion and we did not examine the impact of factors that may influence the completeness of the returned questionnaires. However, factors that influence the readability of questionnaires, such as the number of syllables per word, words per sentence, typeface and font size may have an important effect on both the proportion of questions that are answered and indeed the overall

response proportion.

Finally, although postal questionnaires are commonly used in the collection of data in epidemiological studies, the identification of strategies to increase response to other forms of survey data collection methods, such as personal or telephone interviews and electronic mail, is also important. In the recent update to this review we have included electronic questionnaires, and a review of the evidence for increasing response to telephone interviews is in preparation.

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* Indicates the major publication for the study

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDIES

Characteristics of included studies [ordered by study ID]

Aadahl 2003

Methods	Random allocation: random numbers using SAS	
Data	Random sample of 2543 men and women from the Danish Civil Registration System (Copenhagen County, Denmark)	
Comparisons	1. Lottery (25 euro voucher) 2. Control	
Outcomes	Response at 4 weeks	
Topic	Health: Self-rated health, physical activity, and socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 40.5 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Adams 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Full-time students (Brigham Young University, US)	
Comparisons	1. 1-page questionnaire 2. 3-page questionnaire 3. 5- page questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response at 3 months	
Topic	Non-health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Adams 1982 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Albaum 1987

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Members of a public employees credit
Comparisons	1. University source; Open code 2. Research firm source; Open code 3. Credit union source; Open code 4. University source; No code 5. Research firm source; No code 6. Credit union source; No code Mailed reminder notification and follow up
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Albaum 1989

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Marketing managers of manufacturing firms (Denmark)
Comparisons	1. Pre-contact by letter; Brochure explaining the study in depth 2. Pre-contact; No brochure 3. No pre-contact; Brochure 4. No pre-contact; No brochure
Outcomes	Response within 67 days
Topic	Non-health: Business, Employment, and Finance
Mode of Administration	Postal

Albaum 1989 (Continued)

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Alutto 1970

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Members of a western New York State chamber of commerce	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent to work address 2. Questionnaire sent to home address	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards universities	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Andreasen 1970

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	New York State lottery winners	
Comparisons	1. Mimeographed salutation; Follow-up mimeographed 2. Mimeographed salutation; Follow-up handwritten 3. Hand-typed salutation; Follow-up mimeographed 4. Hand-typed salutation; Follow-up handwritten 5. Hand-typed salutation using name of participant with hand-written postscript; Follow-up mimeographed 6. Hand-typed salutation using name of participant with hand-written postscript; Follow-up handwritten Follow-up letters sent after 3 weeks. Follow-up questionnaires sent after 4 weeks	

Andreasen 1970 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Arzheimer 1999

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A random sample of people listed on registration file, Hamburg, Germany	
Comparisons	1. Phonecard worth 6 Deutsch marks included 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response in first wave of mailing	
Topic	Non-health: Voting behaviour	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Asch 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Subscribers to Nursing who had previously indicated practice in critical care settings (US)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent 3 times 2. Questionnaire sent with postcard. If postcard was returned, participant received no follow-up mailings	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Asch 1996 (Continued)

Topic	Health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: no further information on allocation concealment	
Risk of bias		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Asch 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Primary care physicians identified through the American Medical Association Physician Master File (US)	
Comparisons	1. \$2 incentive sent with questionnaire 2. \$5 incentive sent with questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: no further information on allocation concealment	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ashing-Giwa 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A sample of African-American and white American breast cancer patients diagnosed in 1989 and 1990	
Comparisons	1. \$5 gift certificate sent with questionnaire 2. Promise of \$5 gift certificate on response	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Ashing-Giwa 2000 (Continued)

Topic	Health: Quality of life in long-term breast cancer survivors	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 63.6 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Aveyard 2001

Methods	Random allocation: participants randomly sorted and then first 150 given intervention	
Data	300 smokers selected randomly from 2 general practices in the United Kingdom	
Comparisons	1. Pencil and eraser sent with questionnaire 2. No pencil or eraser sent with questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Recruitment for a smoking cessation programme	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Bachman 1987

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Tax payers (Missouri)	
Comparisons	1. Student sponsor; Social appeal 2. Student sponsor; Help the sponsor appeal 3. Business sponsor; Social appeal 4. Business sponsor; Help the sponsor appeal 5. Commercial sponsor; Social appeal 6. Commercial sponsor; Help the sponsor appeal	

Bachman 1987 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Public attitude towards Missouri Department of Revenue	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: no further information on allocation concealment	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Barker 1996

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation	
Data	Individuals randomly selected from electoral registers (Solihull, UK)	
Comparisons	1. Question on sexual health included 2. Question on sexual health not included Reminder letter and questionnaire sent to non-responders 3 weeks after initial mailing	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Sexual health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Bauer 2004

Methods	Random allocation	
Data	People who participated both in the Community Intervention Trial for Smoking Cessation (COMMIT) as well as the follow-up study	

Bauer 2004 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Cheque 2. US\$ 10 Cheque 3. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Smoking cessation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Mostly 48-57 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Becker 2000a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	BSN alumni who graduated between 1989 and 1997 who had not returned an initial survey	
Comparisons	1. Second questionnaire sent as follow up 2. Postcard follow up (no second questionnaire)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Professional experience since graduation and perceptions of academic preparation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Additional data obtained from author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Becker 2000b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Alumni who graduated with a PhD or MSN between 1988 and 1997 who had not returned an initial survey	
Comparisons	1. Second questionnaire sent as follow up 2. Postcard follow up (no second questionnaire)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Professional experience since graduation and perceptions of academic preparation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Additional data obtained from author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Beebe 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Medicaid enrollees.Simple random sample	
Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Racial and ethnic disparities in the use of health services and barriers to care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Beebe 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Medicaid enrollees, American Indian	
Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Racial and ethnic disparities in the use of health services and barriers to care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Beebe 2005c

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Medicaid enrollees	
Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Racial and ethnic disparities in the use of health services and barriers to care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Beebe 2005d

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Medicaid enrollees, Somali	
Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Racial and ethnic disparities in the use of health services and barriers to care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Beebe 2005e

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Medicaid enrollees. Latino	
Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Racial and ethnic disparities in the use of health services and barriers to care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Beebe 2005f

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Medicaid enrollees, African American	
Comparisons	1. US\$ 2 Bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Racial and ethnic disparities in the use of health services and barriers to care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Beebe 2007

Methods	Random allocation: using RANUNI function in SAS	
Data	Mayo clinic patients	
Comparisons	1. Small booklet (6 1/8 X 8 1/4") 2. Large booklet (8 1/4 X 11") 3. Blue booklet 8. White booklet	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Measure awareness and knowledge of privacy practices, and general opinions on privacy and health care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author; Mean age: 57.6 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Bell 2004

Methods	Random allocation : computerised random number generation
Data	People who had signed up for the 'Adventist Health Study-2'
Comparisons	1. Follow-up phone call 2. No follow-up phone call
Outcomes	Response within approximately 6 months
Topic	Health: Dietary habits and risk of cancer
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Me an age: 67.5 years; Additional data obtained from author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Bellizzi 1986

Methods	Random allocation: random draw
Data	People randomly selected from a local city telephone directory, USA
Comparisons	1. \$1 bill included with questionnaire 2. No incentive
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Supermarket shopping
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Berdie 1973

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Staff of University of Minnesota, including professors of each rank	
Comparisons	1. 1-page questionnaire 2. 2-page questionnaire 3. 4- page questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response within 20 days	
Topic	Non-health: Current social problems	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Bergen 1957

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Teachers in municipal elementary schools (Amsterdam)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification 2. None	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Berk 1993

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	Physicians	
Comparisons	1. \$10 with first mailing; Follow-up questionnaire and letter mentioning the incentive 2. No incentive with first mailing; Follow-up questionnaire with a \$10 incentive and letter explaining the importance of the study 3. No mention of \$10 incentive in either first or second mailing Follow-ups sent after 3 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Cost-effectiveness of 2 alternative methods of diagnosing allergies	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Berry 1987

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physician members of the American Medical Association	
Comparisons	1. Cheque sent with first mailing 2. Promise of cheque with first mailing Non-responders received a second mailing followed by a telephone call. If they no longer had the questionnaire, a third copy was sent	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Evaluation of National Institute of Health Consensus Development Programme	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 48 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Berry 1987 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Beydoun 2006

Methods	Random allocation: using computerised database
Data	Women of reproductive age residing in Iowa county
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$5 Telephone card + Conditional \$25 Check 2. Conditional \$ 30 Check
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Electronic: CATI
Notes	Age: 18-49 years; Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Bhandari 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Surgeon members of the orthopaedic trauma association
Comparisons	1. Survey endorsed in cover letter by 'opinion leaders' (high profile surgeons) 2. Survey not endorsed
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Evaluate surgeons opinions regarding optimal treatment of fractures of the tibial shaft
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Mean age: 30.5 years; Mainly males

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Bhandari 2003 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate
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Biner 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of a mid-western US city
Comparisons	1. Reactance appeal; \$1 incentive 2. Reactance appeal; No incentive 3. No reactance appeal; \$1 incentive 4. No reactance appeal; No incentive
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Residents attitudes about the city
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Biner 1990

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of a mid-western US city
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive; Obligatory cover letter 2. \$1 incentive; Appreciative cover letter 3. \$0.25 incentive; Obligatory cover letter 4. \$0.25 incentive; Appreciative cover letter
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Residents attitudes about the city
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Biner 1990 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Biner 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of a mid-western US city
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire; \$1 incentive and obligatory cover letter 2. Short questionnaire; \$1 incentive and appreciative cover letter 3. Long questionnaire; \$1 incentive and obligatory cover letter 4. Long questionnaire; \$1 incentive and appreciative cover letter
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Residents attitudes about the city
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Birnholtz 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Users of a collaboratory for earthquake engineering research
Comparisons	1. \$5 bill 2. Gift certificate for Amazon.com
Outcomes	Response period was 6 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Participants research work and perception of a set of collaboration tools
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web based
Notes	Additional data obtained from the author

Risk of bias

Birnholtz 2004 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Blass 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Certified psychologists who did not respond to previous mailing of the questionnaire
Comparisons	1. Consensus statement; Threat of follow up 2. Consensus statement; No threat of follow up 3. No consensus statement; Threat of follow up 4. No consensus statement; No threat of follow up
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Psychologist behavior and attitudes towards continuing education
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Blass-Wilhems 1982

Methods	Random allocation: random walk sampling
Data	Not known
Comparisons	1. Real postage stamp 2. Postage paid reply
Outcomes	-
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Blass-Wilhems 1982 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Blomberg 1996

Methods	Random allocation: using a list of numbers between 1-99 selected in a 'random' order by a researcher	
Data	Patients at the Stockholm County Council Institute of Psychotherapy	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire with promise of lottery ticket on response 2. Questionnaire with lottery ticket enclosed 3. Questionnaire with no incentive All non-respondents were sent reminders at 3, 6 and 10 weeks after initial mailing At 14 weeks, non-responders were sent a brief questionnaire regarding their reasons for not responding	
Outcomes	Response within 12 weeks. Response period for second questionnaire not specified	
Topic	Health: Psychotherapy measures - General Symptom Index, Sense of Coherence, and Change in Target Complaints	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Author confirmed allocation concealment	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Blythe 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Social workers	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire with an opportunity to enter a lottery 2. Questionnaire without lottery offer Reminder letter sent after 1 week. Non-respondents followed-up at 3 and 7 weeks with offer to participate in the lottery	
Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Health: Application of clinical evaluation tools in practice	

Blythe 1986 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Boser 1990

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Graduates from the College of Education of a major university (US)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire in folder format 2. Questionnaire in stapled format	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Teaching	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Bosnjak 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Local professional sales association members in the mid-atlantic US	
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$2 via Paypal 2. Conditional \$2 3. Conditional Prize draw (two \$50 and four \$25 prizes) 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-Health: Trends and concerns in real estates	

Bosnjak 2003 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate.

Bredart 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Breast cancer patients undergoing surgical treatment within the surgery department of the European Institute of Oncology in Milan	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent 2 weeks after hospital discharge 2. Questionnaire sent 3 months after hospital discharge	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brehaut 2006

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Members of the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians	
Comparisons	1. Single sided print format 2. Double sided print format 3. Known sender recognition 4. Unknown sender recognition	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Brehaut 2006 (Continued)

Topic	Health: Clinical decision rules	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Brems 2006

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Licensed healthcare professionals from Alaska and New Mexico in the US	
Comparisons	1. First-class mail 2. Priority mail	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Range of treatment used by physical and behavioural healthcare providers, ethical issues	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Brennan 1991

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed on 1 of the 57 electoral rolls representing the main urban centres, New Zealand	
Comparisons	1. Control - no incentive 2. 20c coin with first mailing 3. 50c coin with first mailing 4. \$1 note with first mailing 5. 20c coin with second mailing 6. 50c coin with second mailing	

Brennan 1991 (Continued)

	7. \$1 note with second mailing 8. Entry into prize draw for \$200 cash offered with each mail out 9. Entry into prize draw for \$200 gift voucher offered with each mail out	
Outcomes	Response within 21 days of the third mailing (49 days after initial mailing)	
Topic	Non-health: Personal finance status	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Randomisation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brennan 1992a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed on a financial service company's 'hot prospect' list	
Comparisons	1. \$0.50 incentive 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Finances and shopping behaviours	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brennan 1992b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed on the electoral roll (New Zealand)	
Comparisons	1. \$0.50 incentive 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Finances and shopping behaviours	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brennan 1992c

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed on the electoral roll (New Zealand)	
Comparisons	1. \$0.50 incentive 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Finances and shopping behaviours	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brennan 1993a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Dairy and beef farmers	
Comparisons	1. \$0.50 coin with first mailing 2. \$1 coin with first mailing 3. \$1 lottery ticket with first mailing 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brennan 1993b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed on the electoral roll (New Zealand)	
Comparisons	1. \$0.50 coin with first mailing 2. \$1 coin with first mailing 3. Promise that \$1 would be donated to a charity for each valid return (in each of 3 mailings) 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Bright 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	US Marinas	
Comparisons	1. Offer of entry into a prize draw and summary of study results on return of questionnaire 2. No incentive offered	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Perceptions of decision makers at US Marinas	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brook 1978

Methods	Random allocation: alternation.	
Data	People who had been interviewed when shopping (Southampton, UK)	
Comparisons	1. First class stamp out; First class stamp return 2. First class stamp out; Second class stamp return 3. Second class stamp out; First class stamp return 4. Second class stamp out; Second class stamp return 5. First class stamp out; Second class business reply return 6. Second class stamp out; Second class business reply return	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Brown 1965

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Non-paediatric physicians (US)
Comparisons	1. 2-page questionnaire (first page was letter with 2 cystic fibrosis screening questions; second page asked for details of patients seen) 2. 1-page cover letter and postcard with 2 cystic fibrosis screening questions
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Cystic fibrosis
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brown 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Officers and enlisted men
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification; Randomised enquiry method 2. No pre-notification; Randomised enquiry method 3. Pre-notification; Conventional method 4. No pre-notification; Conventional method
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Assessment of illicit drug use
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Bruce 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People randomly selected from households in central Sydney (Australia) who had agreed to participate during an earlier phone interview	
Comparisons	1. Phone call reminder to non-responders 2. Postcard reminder to non-responders	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Colorectal Cancer Screening	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Brøgger 2007

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Permanent residents of Norway	
Comparisons	1. Postal plus optional Internet response 2. Only postal response	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Respiratory survey (to establish the occurrence and risk factors for asthma and allergies)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 30.7 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Buchman 1982

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Certified public accountants	
Comparisons	1. Conventional questionnaire 2. Randomised response technique employed for each question	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Audit procedures	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Burns 1980

June 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A random sample of bank and savings and loan chief executive officers, USA	
Comparisons	1. No incentive; No follow up 2. 25 cent incentive; No follow up 3. 25 cent incentive; Follow-up postcard sent 10 days after initial mailing 4. No incentive; Follow-up postcard sent 10 days after initial mailing	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Commercial population	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Buttle 1997

Methods	Random allocation	
Data	Managing Directors of the companies listed on the DTI Quality Assurance Register 1995	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaires printed on white paper 2. Questionnaires printed on yellow paper	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Perceived costs and benefits of ISO 9000 in certified organisations	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Cabana 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Paediatricians listed as general paediatricians in the American Medical Association master file	
Comparisons	1. Survey logo on questionnaire only 2. Survey logo on cover letter, return envelope, questionnaire and outer envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Campbell 1990

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed on the electoral roll (Southampton, UK)	
Comparisons	1. Participants told replies would be anonymous 2. Participants told replies would not be anonymous and would be followed-up after 3 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Knowledge of AIDS	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Camunas 1990

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Nurses who were members of the New York State Nurses Association	
Comparisons	Experiment 1: 1. Questionnaire, cover letter and brochure 2. Questionnaire, cover letter with an invitation to join the Nursing association and brochure 3. Questionnaire and cover letter only Experiment 2: 1. Questionnaire, cover letter and \$1bill incentive 2. Questionnaire and cover letter only Questionnaires were colour-coded for each group. No pre-contact or follow up used	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Professional membership behaviour	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Camunas 1990 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Carling 2004

Methods	Random allocation:method not specified
Data	Journalists in the health field
Comparisons	1. International postal vouchers 2. No International postal vouchers
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: barriers and facilitators to high quality health journalism
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Carpenter 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	People listed on an automobile registration list (Arizona, US)
Comparisons	1. Least personalised questionnaire 2. Somewhat personalised questionnaire 3. Most personalised questionnaire 4. Control group
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Migration behaviour
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Carpenter 1974 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Carpenter 1977

Methods	Random allocation: alternation
Data	Heads of households and their spouses selected from the annually compiled auto registration list
Comparisons	1. 2 questionnaires allocated per household 2. 1 questionnaire allocated per household
Outcomes	Response within 7 weeks
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Cartwright 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Recent mothers
Comparisons	<p>Experiment 1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long questionnaire about facts and attitudes 2. Medium questionnaire about facts and attitudes 3. Short questionnaire about facts and attitudes 4. Long questionnaire about facts only 5. Medium questionnaire about facts only 6. Short questionnaire about facts only <p>Experiment 2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government department sponsor (OPCS, UK) 2. University sponsor (Institute for Social Studies in Medical Care) <p>Experiment 3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asked to tick boxes in response 2. Asked to ring pre-codes in response

Cartwright 1986 (Continued)

Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Maternity	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Cartwright 1987

Methods	Random allocation: systematic division	
Data	Elderly people from the electoral registers in Woodford and Wanstead, London and Blackley, Manchester, UK	
Comparisons	1. Shorter questionnaire (2 questions) 2. Longer questionnaire (5 questions)	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Medication and relationship with GPs	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Chan 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Chinese Medicine Practitioners registered with the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong	
Comparisons	1. HK \$ 20 2. HK \$ 30 3. No Incentives	

Chan 2003 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Knowledge, attitudes, and practices on computers and computer use in clinical practice	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Mostly 40-59 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Chebat 1991

1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	The Quebec population within the legal driving age	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification; Non-monetary incentive 2. Pre-notification; No incentive 3. No pre notification; Non-monetary incentive 4. No pre notification; No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Driving behaviour	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation and concealment ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Chen 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students from 4 Taipei Universities	

Chen 1984 (Continued)

Comparisons	1.Long questionnaire - 5 pages 2. Short questionnaire - 2 pages 3. High salient topic - cutting-class behaviours in undergraduates 4. Low salient topic - cutting-class behaviours in PhD students 5. High authority researcher - University professor with a PhD in Psychology 6. Low authority researcher - Student from the Psychology department	
Outcomes	Response period within 10 days	
Topic	Non-health: Class cutting behaviour	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Language of publication is Chinese	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Childers 1979

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Agents of large Midwest-based multiple-line insurance company (US)	
Comparisons	1. Advance letter with commitment postcard. Asked to return the postcard to say if will participate and how long they will take to respond. 'Yes' responses then sent a questionnaire 2. Advance letter with commitment postcard. Asked to return the postcard only to say if will participate. 'Yes' responses then sent questionnaire 3. Control - no prior commitment sought. All sent questionnaires Reminder postcards sent after 4 days. Non respondents sent another questionnaire after 3 weeks	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Insurance	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Childers 1980a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Academics on the American Marketing Association Roster	
Comparisons	1. Egoistic appeal; Hand-written postscript 2. Egoistic appeal; Typed postscript 3. Help the sponsor appeal; Hand-written postscript 4. Help the sponsor appeal; Typed postscript 5. Social utility appeal; Hand-written postscript 6. Social utility appeal; Typed postscript All participants received reminders after 1 week	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing texts	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Childers 1980b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Business practitioners on a mailing list of a major south-western university (US)	
Comparisons	1. Egoistic appeal; Hand-written postscript 2. Egoistic appeal; Typed postscript 3. Help the sponsor appeal; Hand-written postscript 4. Help the sponsor appeal; Typed postscript 5. Social utility appeal; Hand-written postscript 6. Social utility appeal; Typed postscript All participants received reminders after 1 week	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing texts	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Childers 1980b (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Childers 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Policyholders of a national insurance company (US)	
Comparisons	1. Computer-printed out-going envelope, computer-printed return-envelope, cover letter explained name and address were for research only 2. Computer-printed out-going envelope, computer-printed return-envelope, cover letter did not explain name and address were for research only 3. Computer-printed out-going envelope, participants given provision to write own name and address on return envelope, cover letter explained name and address were for research only 4. Computer-printed out-going envelope, participants given provision to write own name and address on return envelope, cover letter did not explain name and address were for research only 5. Labelled address on out-going envelope, computer-printed return address, cover letter explained name and address were for research only 6. Labelled address on out-going envelope, computer-printed return address, cover letter did not explain name and address were for research only 7. Labelled address on out-going envelope, participants given provision to write own name and address on return envelope, cover letter explained name and address were for research only 8. Labelled address on out-going envelope, participants given provision to write own name and address on return envelope, cover letter did not explain name and address were for research only	
Outcomes	Response within 12 days	
Topic	Non-health: Payment of car insurance	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Childers TL 1979

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	American marketing association practitioner members	
Comparisons	1. Small paper size (8½ X 11“) 2. Large paper size (8½ X 14”) 3. Single sided 4. Double sided	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing concepts, Employment features	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate.

Choi 1990

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Members of the Ontario Nurses' Association	
Comparisons	1. No stamp on return envelope 2. Business-reply stamp 3. Metered stamp 4. Small regular stamp 5. Large commemorative stamp	
Outcomes	Response within 92 days	
Topic	-	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Christie 1985

Methods	Random allocation: alternation
Data	People aged 18+ years listed in the 1984 Auckland telephone directory, New Zealand
Comparisons	1. Hand written signature on covering letter (HW); Actual age and income asked for (AAI); Typed address on outgoing envelope (Ty) 2. HW; AAI; Hand written address on outgoing envelope (HE) 3. HW; Age and income bracket asked for (AIB); Ty 4. HW; AIB; HE 5. Typed signature on covering letter (T); AAI; Ty 6. T; AAI; HE 7. T; AIB; Ty 8. T; AIB; HE
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Marketing - awareness of macadamia nuts, purchase behaviour
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Church 2004

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of Wright County in Minnesota, US
Comparisons	1. Only questionnaire 2. Questionnaire + Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) - No reminder 3. Questionnaire + Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) + Reminder
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Colorectal screening
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Mean age: 63 years; Mainly females; 49 % of participants belonging to group 2 was inadvertently delivered the 1st reminder

Clark 2001

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	All consultants listed on the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists database (UK)
Comparisons	1. Simple plastic ballpoint pen sent with questionnaire. 2. No pen
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Views on gynaecological endoscopy
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	1 reminder was sent to all non-responders 3 months after initial mailing

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Clark TJ 2001

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	All gynaecologists identified from the British Society of Gynaecological Endoscopy database of members
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire and covering letter printed on standard quality white paper 2. Questionnaire and covering letter printed on high quality white paper
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Hysteroscopy
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Clarke 1998

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Study survivors resident in 3 health authority areas	
Comparisons	1. 3 extra questions on current sources of income included 2. Extra questions not included 3. Extra questionnaire on cognitive functioning included 4. Extra questionnaire not included	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Whitehall study	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mean age: 77 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Clausen 1947

Chapter 27.1

Methods	Random allocation: systematic division	
Data	Non-respondents to an earlier survey	
Comparisons	1. Impersonal salutation; Handwritten signature; Franked outward envelope 2. Impersonal salutation; Facsimile signature; Franked outward envelope 3. Personal salutation; Facsimile signature; Franked outward envelope 4. Personal salutation; Handwritten signature; Franked outward envelope 5. Personal salutation; Handwritten signature; Air mail and special delivery outward envelope	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Health: National Service Life Insurance (NSLI)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Clausen 1947 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate
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Claycomb 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Marketing executives and managers representing a geographic cross section of the US	
Comparisons	Intervals between the original and 2 rounds of follow-up mailings: 1. 3 days 2. 6 days 3. 9 days 4. 12 days 5. 15 days 6. 18 days 7. 21 days 8. 24 days 9. 27 days 10. 30 days 11. 33 days 12. 36 days 13. 39 days 14. 42 days 15. 45 days 16. 48 days 17. 51 days 18. 54 days 19. 57 days 20. 60 days	
Outcomes	Response after 3 mailings	
Topic	Non-health: Companies customer relation practices	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Dates of initial mailings randomised to prevent seasonal biases	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Cleopas 2006

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Adults discharged from teaching hospital system in Geneva	
Comparisons	1. 2-original response format (yes/no) 2. 3-point similarity format (applies completely/in part/not at all) 3. 5-point intensity format (completely true to completely false) 4. 5-point frequency format (all the time to never).	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Patient based outcome measure (Nottingham Health Profile)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate.

Cobanoglu 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Managers who are members of the American Management Association (AMA)	
Comparisons	1. Luggage tag (LT) 2. Prize draw for a personal digital assistant (PDA) 3. Prize draw for both LT + PDA 4. Control.	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	Adequate

Cockayne 2005

Methods	Random allocation	
Data	Community dwelling women aged over 70 years living in the York and Cumbria area	
Comparisons	1. Offer of study results 2. Control	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Calcium and Vitamin D supplementation for fracture prevention	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Independent researchers from the York Trials Unit randomised the eligible women. Administration of the questionnaire was not blind to group allocation Age: Above 70 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	Adequate.

Collins 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of the RAND adolescent / young adult panel study drawn from schools across the US	
Comparisons	1. \$20 cash with mailing 2. \$20 cash promised on return of questionnaire 3. \$25 cash promised on return of questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response within approximately 4 months	
Topic	Health: Substance use, problem behavior, predictors of risk behavior, attitudes and beliefs	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Corcoran 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Masters level social workers	
Comparisons	1. First class stamped return envelope 2. Reply permit return envelope Follow-up postcard sent to all subjects 3 to 4 weeks after original mailing	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	-	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Cox 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residents of a south-western city listed in the metropolitan telephone directory (US)	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter; Follow-up postcard after 3 days 2. Personalised cover letter; No follow-up postcard 3. No personalised cover letter; Follow-up postcard after 3 days 4. No personalised cover letter; No follow-up postcard	
Outcomes	Response within 16 days	
Topic	Non-health: Finance - appraise consumer evaluations of financial institutions	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Crittenden 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Alumni members of a National Business School	
Comparisons	1. White questionnaire 2. Yellow questionnaire 3. Questionnaire using Letter quality printer 4. Questionnaire using Dot-matrix printer	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non health: Education	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	2 x 2 Factorial design	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Cycyota 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Businesses form the state sales and use of license records in the Southwestern region of US
Comparisons	1. US \$1 bill 2. No incentive 3. Advance notice 4. No advance notice 5. Personalised salutation 6. No personalised salutation 7. Telephone follow up 8. No telephone follow up
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Employment
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	2 X 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 fully crossed factorial design; Mainly males
<i>Risk of bias</i>	

Cycyota 2002 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Deehan 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	GPs who did not respond to 2 mailings of a questionnaire (UK)	
Comparisons	Third mailing: 1. No incentive 2. £5 charity donation 3. £10 charity donation 4. £5 payment 5. £10 payment Fourth mailing to non responders in control group of third mailing: 1. £5 payment 2. £10 payment	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Information on clinical work with alcohol misusing patients	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Del Valle 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of the American Association of Neurologists who did not respond to 2 earlier mailings	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent by certified mail with return receipt request postcard 2. Questionnaire sent by first class mail	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	-	

Del Valle 1997 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Delnevo 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using a statistical software package	
Data	New Jersey Internists, general practitioners, family physicians, paediatricians, and obstetrician and gynaecologists	
Comparisons	1. Up-front \$25 gift card 2. Promised \$25 gift card	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Smoking cessation - attitudes and practice	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	The investigators were not blinded to the treatment allocation - confirmed by the author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Denton 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Graduates from the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction at a large university in the south-west (US)	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. Newsletter 3. \$0.25 4. \$0.25 and newsletter	

Denton 1988 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Education	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Denton 1991

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Experiments 1 and 2: Graduates from the Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction at a large university in the south-west (US)	
Comparisons	Experiment 1: 1. No incentive 2. Newsletter 3. \$0.25 4. \$0.25 and newsletter Experiment 2: 1. No incentive 2. \$0.25 3. \$0.50 4. \$1 5. Raffle	
Outcomes	Experiment 2 : Response within 2 months	
Topic	Non-health : Classroom teachers pedagogical knowledge and skills	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Deutskens 2004a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation in SPSS	
Data	Participants of the multi-client attitude and usage study in the Netherlands	
Comparisons	1. 2 Euros voucher for an online book and CD store 2. 5 Euros voucher for an online book and CD store 3. Lotteries to win vouchers worth 25 Euros 4. Lotteries to win vouchers worth 50 Euros 5. Charity donation of 500 Euros to either World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Amnesty International, or a Cancer Association 6. Short version of the questionnaire 7. Long version of the questionnaire 8. Visual presentation of response categories 9. Textual presentation of response categories 10. Early follow up (after 1 week) 11. Late follow up (after 2 weeks)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non health: Marketing	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	3 X 2 X 2 X 2 Factorial design. Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author Age: Mostly 35-49; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Deutskens 2004b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation in SPSS	
Data	University students	
Comparisons	1. Lottery to win 1 out of 10 vouchers of 25 Euros 2. Lottery to win 1 out of 5 vouchers of 50 Euros 3. Lottery to win a DVD Player	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Education	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online	

Deutskens 2004b (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	Adequate

Dillman 1974a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A group of Washington State University alumni	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter 2. Non- personalised cover letter	
Outcomes	Response after 4 mailings	
Topic	Non-health: Feelings and concerns about Washington State University	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained to be random through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dillman 1974b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A systematic sample of people listed in the phone directories of Washington state, USA	
Comparisons	1. No pre-contact 2. Telephone pre-contact	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Feelings and concerns about Washington State University	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Dillman 1974b (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained to be random through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dillman 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Housing units identified by the census bureaus address control file	
Comparisons	1. 1990 short form (control) questionnaire 2. Booklet 3. Micro form 4. Micro form requesting SSN 5. Roster form	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Census	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dillman 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	National probability sample of households in the USA	
Comparisons	1. Control group 2. Benefit appeal on envelope and insert; Strong confidentiality assurance 3. Benefit appeal on envelope and insert; Standard confidentiality assurance 4. Mandatory appeal on envelope and insert; Strong confidentiality assurance 5. Mandatory appeal on envelope and insert; Standard confidentiality assurance 6. Mandatory appeal on envelope only; No confidentiality assurance	

Dillman 1996 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Census	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	D - Not used

Dirmaier 2007

Methods	Random allocation: using computer assisted algorithm	
Data	Patients admitted for Psychotherapeutic treatment	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire 3. 5 German Mark bill 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Mental Health outcome and treatment research	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Mostly 40-59; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dodd 1987

Methods	Random allocation: using a table of random numbers	
Data	Women employed full-time in various civil servant positions at a university (US)	

Dodd 1987 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Hand-signed, professor status, female author 2. Hand-signed, student status, female author 3. Hand-signed, professor status, male author 4. Hand-signed, student status, male author 5. Photocopied signature, professor status, female author 6. Photocopied signature, student status, female author 7. Photocopied signature, professor status, male author 8. Photocopied signature, student status, male author	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Allocation concealment not described; Mean age: 42 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 1980a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in the Cincinnati telephone directory (US)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire with low threat follow up 2. Questionnaire with low-moderate follow up 3. Questionnaire with low-moderate follow up (different to above) 4. Questionnaire with moderate follow up 5. Questionnaire with follow up with moderate appeal 6. Questionnaire with prepaid incentive of 25 cents in follow up 7. Personally asked to compare the relative noxiousness of the threat of appeals sent to groups 1-4 Non-respondents to the initial mailings were followed-up	
Outcomes	Response within 31 days.	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards questionnaire, socio- demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Dommeyer 1980a (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 1980b

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Individuals listed in the Cincinnati telephone directory (US)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire with ID number typed on lower right-hand corner of last page 2. As above, with words: 'Please do not remove identifying code number' typed to next to the ID number	
Outcomes	Response within 13 days	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards questionnaire, socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Dommeyer 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Undergraduate business students (US)	
Comparisons	1. Interesting questionnaire; No summary of results offered 2. Interesting questionnaire; Results summary offered 3. Uninteresting questionnaire; No summary of results offered 4. Uninteresting questionnaire; Results summary offered	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Finance - Tax survey; Mind Inventory Catalogue	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Dommeyer 1985 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 1987

Methods	Random allocation using alternation	
Data	Telephone owners in Cincinnati	
Comparisons	1. Negative appeal mention of follow up 2. Usual mail 3. Prepaid incentive of 25 cent each	
Outcomes	Response to be received by 28th June	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes and familiarity towards mail; Education, Employment	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Dommeyer 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in the Chicago and Phoenix telephone directory	
Comparisons	Different postscripts used on letter depending on intervention: 1. No incentive 2. 25 cent coin 3. 25 cent cheque 4. 25 cent money order 5. Early bird - get a share in an incentive (\$25) if send questionnaire back quickly 6. Sweep stake (entered into sweepstake to win \$25 if return questionnaire by deadline) All participants sent cover letter and questionnaire in window envelope	
Outcomes	-	

Dommeyer 1988 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Product tampering and Morality Conscience Guilt Scale	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 1989

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Personal computer owners, manufacturers and retailers	
Comparisons	1. Cover letter stressed importance of response and emphasised that respondents' names would never be placed on the questionnaire (control group) 2. Second paragraph offered respondents a summary of the results 3. Standard cover letter. Offer of a copy of the results made in a separate 'lift' letter	
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Knowledge and attitudes towards computer counterfeiting	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 1991

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Californian residents who were entitled to a refund	
Comparisons	1. Teaser printed on envelope 2. No teaser on envelope	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	

Dommeyer 1991 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Finance - Awareness and attitudes towards insurance refunds	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed in a telephone directory (Los Angeles, USA)	
Comparisons	1. Photograph of an 'attractive' researcher printed on cover letter 2. No photo printed on cover letter	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards music censorship and warning stickers on music albums	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dommeyer 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using randomised incomplete block design	
Data	Undergraduate business major students at California State University	
Comparisons	1. Grade incentive 2. In-class Demonstration of the web survey 3. Early grade feedback 4. Control	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Dommeyer 2004 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Education	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Donaldson 1999

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physicians randomly selected from a list of US physicians actively caring for at least 1 transplant patient	
Comparisons	1. \$5 check with initial mailing; No follow-up call 2. \$5 check with initial mailing; Follow-up call to non-responders 4 weeks after initial mailing 3. No incentive; No follow-up call 4. No incentive; Follow-up call to non-responders 4 weeks after initial mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 47 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Doob 1971a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in a phone book (Toronto and Ontario, Canada)	
Comparisons	1. No reactance (letter written normally); No incentive 2. No reactance; Dime incentive 3. Reactance (request written to make participants feel an attempt was being made to limit their freedom) ; No money	

Doob 1971a (Continued)

	4. Reactance; Dime incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Health: Knowledge that smoking causes cancer	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Doob 1971b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in a phone book (Toronto and Ontario, Canada)	
Comparisons	1. No reactance (letter written normally); No incentive 2. No reactance; Dime incentive 3. Reactance (request written to make participants feel an attempt was being made to limit their freedom) ; No money 4. Reactance; Dime incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Health: Knowledge that smoking causes cancer	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Doob 1971c

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in a phone book (Toronto and Ontario, Canada)	
Comparisons	1. No reactance (letter written normally); No incentive 2. No reactance; 20 cents incentive 3. Reactance (request written to make participants feel an attempt was being made to limit their freedom) ; No money 4. Reactance; 20 cents incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Health: Knowledge that smoking causes cancer	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Doob 1973

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in a telephone directory (Canada)	
Comparisons	1. 20 cents incentive 2. 5 cents incentive 3. No incentive 1. University sponsor 2. Industrial sponsor	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Automobile ownership, duration spend on watching TV	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Doob 1973 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Doody 2003a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	US radiologist technologists who had not responded to 2 earlier mailings of a questionnaire
Comparisons	1. US first class mail; No incentive 2. US first class mail; \$1 bill 3. US first class mail; \$2 bill 4. US first class mail; \$2 check 5. US first class mail; \$5 check
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	All subjects received a pre-notification letter; Age: Mostly 40-49 years; Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Doody 2003b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	US radiologist technologists who had not responded to 2 earlier mailings of a questionnaire
Comparisons	1. Federal express; No incentive 2. Federal express; \$1 bill 3. Federal express; \$2 bill 4. Federal express; \$2 check
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Age: Mostly 40-49 years; Mainly females

Doody 2003b (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dorman 1997

Methods	Random allocation: using an allocation code generated by an adaptive randomisation algorithm
Data	Patients who had been entered into the International stroke trial between 2 March 1993 and 31 May 1995
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire incorporating the EuroQol 2. Questionnaire incorporating the SF-36 Questionnaires were identical in all respects other than the nature of the HRQoL instrument. EuroQol has 7 questions, SF-36 has 36. Both had same number of pages, but the first questionnaire had fewer questions Reminders sent to non-responders after 2 weeks
Outcomes	-
Topic	Health : SF-36, Euro QoL
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	The randomisation algorithm used aimed to balance the 2 groups for age, sex, stroke syndrome and the time from stroke onset to follow up

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Downes-Le Guin 2002

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation
Data	IT managers in US businesses
Comparisons	1. Unconditional Amazon gift certificate (\$15) 2. Unconditional Amazon gift certificate (\$25) 3. Conditional Amazon gift certificate (\$15) 4. Conditional Amazon gift certificate (\$25)
Outcomes	Response period not specified

Downes-Le Guin 2002 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Marketing	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Drummond 2008

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation	
Data	Primary care physicians working in Ireland	
Comparisons	1. Pre-contact via mail 2. No pre-contact 3. Questionnaire order: Version 1, demographics first 4. Questionnaire order: Version 2, topic specific questions first (Prostate-specific antigen testing)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Views and practices about prostate-specific testing (PSA)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Duffy 2001

Methods	Random allocation: Twin numbered 01 in each pair received single stamp, the other received the intervention	
Data	Twins who are volunteer members of the Australian NHMRC Twin Registry	
Comparisons	1. Single stamp on enclosed return envelope 2. Multiple stamps (3-5) on enclosed return envelope	

Duffy 2001 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Asthma, Psoriasis	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Duhan 1990

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Industrial marketing executives	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification 2. No prior notification	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Dunn 2003

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation	
Data	Patients aged 30-59 years with back pain in the UK	
Comparisons	1. Traditional questionnaire - Generic questionnaires first followed by disease-specific ones 2. Chronological questionnaire - Individual questions arranged in sections according to the period of time that they ask about	

Dunn 2003 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Patient-base outcome measures - Chronic pain grade, SF-36, Hospital & Anxiety Scale, Roland-Morris Disability Questionnaire	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Me an age: 45 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Eaker 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Men and women living in Sweden in 1995	
Comparisons	1. Preliminary notification (PN); Long questionnaire (LQ); Mention of telephone contact (MTC) 2. PN; Short questionnaire (SQ); MTC 3. PN; LQ; No MTC 4. PN; SQ; No MTC 5. No PN; LQ; MTC 6. No PN; SQ; No MTC 7. No PN; LQ; No MTC 8. No PN; SQ; No MTC Reminders sent to all after 1 week	
Outcomes	Response within 75 days	
Topic	Health: Medical history, physical activity, eating and drinking habits, reproductive history	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Mostly above 45 years; Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Easton 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Paediatricians listed in the American Academy of Paediatrics Directory	
Comparisons	1. Information booklet 2. \$1 incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Counselling about sun protection	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Edwards 2001

Methods	Random allocation: central randomisation	
Data	Head injured adults in the CRASH trial (UK)	
Comparisons	1. 1-page questionnaire 2. 3- page questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response within 3 months	
Topic	Health: Disability after traumatic brain injury	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Elkind 1986

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Psychologists with APA membership	
Comparisons	1. Plain covering envelope with rubber-stamped return address 2. University-printed envelope 3. Postage-stamped 4. Business reply	
Outcomes	1. Response rate at 6 weeks 2. Response rate after 12 weeks	
Topic	Health: Patients' violence and harassment	
Mode of Administration	Postal: first class mail	
Notes	Method confirmed by the author; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Enger 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	College graduates	
Comparisons	1. 2-page questionnaire; Stamped return envelope 2. 1-page questionnaire; Stamped return envelope 3. 1-page questionnaire designed as a self-mailer	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	-	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Erdogan 2002

Methods	Random allocation: systematic assignment	
Data	Advertising agency managers who had not responded to a questionnaire mailed 2 weeks previous	
Comparisons	1. Original replacement follow-up mailing: A colour department-headed cover letter, original questionnaire plus self addressed, first class stamped return envelope 2. Photocopy replacement follow-up mailing: A colour department-headed cover letter, photocopied questionnaire plus self addressed, first class stamped return envelope 3. Post card: Colour departmental follow up postcard only 4. Letter: Colour department headed follow up letter only	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Etter 1996

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	French-speaking patients at a medical practice in the suburbs of Geneva who had recently consulted a physician and who lived in Geneva at the time of data collection
Comparisons	1. University letterhead; Cover letter signed by the researchers; Business reply envelope addressed to the University of Geneva 2. Medical Practice letterhead; Cover letter signed by the director of the medical practice; Business reply envelope addressed to the practice Packages sent to non-respondents every 10 days up to a maximum of 4 times Reminder postcards sent 2 days after first and second mailings
Outcomes	Response within 45 days
Topic	Health: Patient satisfaction
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author
<i>Risk of bias</i>	

Etter 1996 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Etter 1998a

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Students, faculty, administrative and technical staff of a university (Geneva, Switzerland)	
Comparisons	1. Sent saliva vial; Offered participation in lottery; Pen incentive 2. Saliva vial; Pen incentive 3. Saliva vial; Offered participation in lottery 4. Saliva vial 5. Offered participation in lottery; Pen incentive 6. Pen incentive 7. Offered participation in lottery 8. None Best response intervention was sent as follow up	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Health status using SF-36, smoking habits, self-efficacy	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mean age: 28.5 years; Mainly females	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Etter 1998b

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Residents of Geneva	
Comparisons	1. Professional layout; Prior feedback letter 2. Professional layout; No prior feedback letter 3. Standard layout; Prior feedback letter 4. Standard layout; Prior feedback letter	
Outcomes	-	

Etter 1998b (Continued)

Topic	Health: Use of health services, satisfaction with medical care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mean age: 32 years; Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Etter 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of various health insurance plans aged 19-45 (Geneva, Switzerland)	
Comparisons	1. Light green paper questionnaire 2. White paper questionnaire 5 follow-up reminder questionnaires were used	
Outcomes	Response within 50 days	
Topic	Health: Health status, health related life styles, use of medical services, satisfaction with medical care, socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 19-45 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Etzel 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Random sample of bank credit card holders on a list provided by a bank, USA	
Comparisons	1. No follow up 2. Follow-up without duplicate questionnaire and return envelope sent 5 days after initial mailing 3. Follow-up with duplicates sent 5 days after initial mailing	

Etzel 1974 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 17 days	
Topic	Non-health: Finance - Credit care usage	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Evans 2004

Table 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Men diagnosed with Prostate cancer	
Comparisons	1. Unconditional 30 minutes prepaid phone card 2. Conditional 30 minutes prepaid phone card	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Dietary supplementation use in cancer patients	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Falthzik 1971

Methods	Random allocation: odd numbered firms received closed question, even numbered firms received open-ended question	
Data	Personnel departments of 200 firms listed in Fortune magazine's list of the 500 largest firms in the US	
Comparisons	1. Closed question 2. Open-ended question	

Falzhzik 1971 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Characteristics while hiring college graduates	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Random allocation unclear	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Faria 1990

Table 1998

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Homeowners residing in a medium sized US city on the 'city property owners' listing	
Comparisons	1. Telephone pre-contact 1-3 days before questionnaire mailing 2. Letter pre-notification sent 2 days before questionnaire mailing 3. No pre-contact	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Faria 1992

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Individuals listed on the company mailing list of a major manufacturer	
Comparisons	1. University sponsor; No promised contribution to charity 2. University sponsor; Promised contribution to a specified charity 3. University sponsor; Promised contribution to 1 of 3 charities selected by respondent	

Faria 1992 (Continued)

	4. Commercial sponsor; No promised contribution to charity 5. Commercial sponsor; Promised contribution to charity 6. Commercial sponsor; Promised contribution to 1 of 3 charities selected by respondent	
Outcomes	Response within 23 days	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Faria 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Patients with acute stroke	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire with stamped return envelope 2. Questionnaire with free post return envelope	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Feild 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Full-time teaching faculty members of a large southeastern university (US)	
Comparisons	1. Signed by male investigator; Sent to male subject 2. Signed by male investigator; Sent to female subject 3. Signed by female investigator; Sent to male subject 4. Signed by female investigator; Sent to female subject 5. Signed by both male and female investigators; Sent to male subject 6. Signed by both male and female investigators; Sent to female subject	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Short form of the attitudes towards women scale	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ferrell 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Practitioners in managerial or administrative capacities listed in the American Marketing Association roster	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent to home address 2. Questionnaire sent to work address	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Marketing terms used by organisations, description of jobs, and their firm	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Finn 1983

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	Heads of households in the trading area of certain financial institutions. The target area was a middle to high income section of the city and included all age groups and family sizes	
Comparisons	1. Return envelope with standard first class stamp and typed return address 2. Pre-printed business reply envelope	
Outcomes	Response within 29 days	
Topic	Non-health: Finance - Usage of financial institutions, attitudes about local banks, savings and loan associations	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Finsen 2006

Methods	Random allocation: alphabetical order	
Data	Norwegian residents aged between 40 and 65 years	
Comparisons	1. Unconditional; 1 scratch lottery worth 20 Norwegian Kroner (NOK) 2. Unconditional; 2 scratch lotteries each worth 20 Norwegian Kroner 3. Conditional; 2 scratch lotteries each worth 20 Norwegian Kroner on reply within one week 4. Unconditional; 50 NOK 5. Control	
Outcomes	Response rate at 6 week	
Topic	Health: History of surgeries	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 51.4 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Fiset 1994

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Dentists insured by a major malpractice carrier in 2 western states (US)	
Comparisons	Experiment 1: 1. \$5 incentive 2. \$10 incentive Follow-up with postcard after 1 week Experiment 2: 1. \$5 incentive 2. \$10 incentive Follow-up with postcard after 1 week Questionnaire package sent to non-responders again at 3 and 7 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Dentist relationship of dental malpractice claims to decisions about clinical practice	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 37-41.4 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Ford 1967a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residents of Chenoa	
Comparisons	1. Advance letter 2. No advance letter	
Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Non-health: Consumer shopping survey	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Ford 1967a (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Ford 1967b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of Beardstown
Comparisons	1. Advance letter 2. No advance letter
Outcomes	Response within 30 days
Topic	Non-health: Consumer shopping survey
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ford 1968

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Households
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire consisted of 1 sheet, printed on both sides which when folded had four 8.5 x 11" pages of questions 2. Questionnaire mimeographed on 1 side only and stapled so had four pages of 8.5 x 14" All participants were sent an advance letter 12 days before the questionnaire was sent
Outcomes	Response within 23 days
Topic	Non-health: Consumer shopping survey
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Ford 1968 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Foushee 1990

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation in SAS
Data	Tour operators in Europe, South America, and Japan
Comparisons	1. Early follow up with post card (3 weeks) 2. Late follow up with post card (6 weeks)
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Potential for attracting and accommodating foreign visitors to national park
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate.

Freise 2001

Methods	Random allocation: using dice
Data	Last 1400 discharged patients of the University hospital of Cologne on 14/02/2000
Comparisons	1. 12 page questionnaire 2. 8 page questionnaire 3. 4 page questionnaire
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Cologne patient questionnaire
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Age: Above 18 years

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Freise 2001 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate
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Friedman 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Travel agents who subscribed to a travel magazine
Comparisons	1. Author had 'Hispanic' name 2. Author had 'Jewish' name 3. Ethnicity of author not identifiable
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Ethnic identification
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Friedman 1979

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Individuals listed in telephone directories of 2 suburban areas in the greater New York Metropolitan area
Comparisons	1. Black sponsor signature; 25 cents incentive 2. Black sponsor signature; No incentive 3. White sponsor signature; 25 cents incentive 4. White sponsor signature; No incentive
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards the Negroes Scale
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Friedman 1979 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Furse 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Microwave oven owners listed in a major manufacturer's warranty registration records
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No personal or charity incentive offered 2. Charity incentive (promise of \$1 to charity of respondent's choice for returned questionnaire) 3. 50 cents enclosed with questionnaire 4. \$1 enclosed with questionnaire 5. 50 cents enclosed with questionnaire and charity incentive (promise of \$1 to charity of respondent's choice for returned questionnaire) 6. \$1 enclosed with questionnaire and charity incentive (promise of \$1 to charity of respondent's choice for returned questionnaire)
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Furst 1979

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Secretaries of school principals
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-notification 2. No pre-notification
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI)
Mode of Administration	Postal

Furst 1979 (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author. Informed that allocation concealment was poor	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Futrell 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Salesmen from a national hospital supply company	
Comparisons	1. Instruction to return the questionnaire unsigned 2. Asked to sign the questionnaire 2 follow-up letters sent 10 days apart 2 weeks after questionnaire sent	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Salesman's attitudes towards their job, evaluation of job performance by supervisors	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Futrell 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Grocery store managers	
Comparisons	1. Allowed to remain anonymous 2. Required to sign questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Job attitudes	

Futrell 1978 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Futrell 1981

March 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Farmers and ranchers	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire and letter 2. Questionnaire and letter; Non-respondents after 2 weeks sent letter and questionnaire 3. Questionnaire and letter; Non-respondents after 2 weeks sent letter only 4. Questionnaire and letter; Non-respondents after 2 and 4 weeks sent letter and questionnaire 5. Questionnaire and letter; Non-respondents after 2 and 4 weeks sent letter only 6. Questionnaire and letter; Non-respondents after 2, 4 and 6 weeks sent letter and questionnaire 7. Questionnaire and letter; Non-respondents after 2, 4 and 6 weeks sent letter only	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Finance - Perceptions of agricultural producers regarding financial lending institutions	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Futrell 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Industrial accountants	
Comparisons	1. No statement assuring anonymity; Asked to return questionnaire the same day it was received 2. No statement assuring anonymity; Asked to return questionnaire at their leisure 3. Statement assuring anonymity; Asked to return questionnaire the same day it was received 4. Statement assuring anonymity; Asked to return questionnaire at their leisure	

Futrell 1982 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Role conflict, role clarity, job tension, job satisfaction	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gajraj 1990

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Customers of a major public utility, comprising households in south-western Ontario	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$0.50 included 3. Promise of \$0.50 on return of completed questionnaire 4. Pen included 5. Promise of pen on return of completed questionnaire 6. Inclusion in share of winning from 5 Super Lotto lottery tickets 7. Promise of inclusion in share of 5 Super Lotto lottery tickets on return of completed questionnaire All sent same questionnaire, mailing envelope, computer printed label and return envelope. Cover letters varied only in stating amount of incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 25 days	
Topic	Non-health: General area of energy conservation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author. Informed that allocation concealment was adequate	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Gaski 2004a

Methods	Random allocation: using coin toss
Data	US “Mass-market” dealers of the Gillette company’s paper mate division
Comparisons	1. Dissertation referencing in the cover letter 2. No dissertation referencing in the cover letter
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Behavioural relations between manufacturer and its distributor
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Gaski 2004b

Methods	Random allocation: using coin toss
Data	Wholesalers serving stationery/ office supply and school supply stores
Comparisons	1. Dissertation referencing in the cover letter 2. No dissertation referencing in the cover letter
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Behavioural relations between manufacturer and its distributor
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Gattellari 2001

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	All active fellows of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)	
Comparisons	1. Promise of a \$A10 donation to RACS for every returned questionnaire 2. No offer of donation	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Need for evidence-based clinical practice guidelines for the management of colorectal cancer	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Gattellari 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using block randomisation	
Data	Men from general practice surgeries in Sydney, Australia	
Comparisons	1. Mention of deadline to return the questionnaire within 1 week 2. No mention of deadline	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Prostate cancer screening	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Gendall 1996

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	New Zealanders aged 18 and above, selected from the New Zealand electoral rolls	
Comparisons	1. Cover with simple graphic design in black letters 2. Cover with complex design in black and red letters 3. Cover with different complex design in black and red letters 4. Inclusion of a picture or a photo 5. Without a picture or a photo	
Outcomes	Response rate at 12 weeks	
Topic	Health: Demography - Family and changing gender roles	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Gendall 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals on the electoral roll (New Zealand)	
Comparisons	1. Control 2. High quality foil-wrapped tea bag included 3. \$1 coin included 2 follow up s sent	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Role of government, attitudes to work orientations	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gendall 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation
Data	New Zealanders aged 18 and above, selected from the New Zealand electoral rolls
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter 2. Non-personalised cover letter
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Environmental issues, demographics
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gendall 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation
Data	New Zealanders aged 18 and above, selected from the New Zealand electoral rolls
Comparisons	1. Cover design - Circle 2. Cover design - Blocks 3. Cover design - No graphics
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Demographics, disability issues, families and friends, experiences of funerals
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gendall 2005c

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	New Zealanders aged 18 and above, selected from the New Zealand electoral rolls	
Comparisons	1. Two 45-cent postage stamp 2. Foil-wrapped dilmah tea bag 3. Small foil-wrapped gold coin with a 20 cent denomination 4. Large foil-wrapped gold coin with either a 50 cent or \$2 denomination 5. No incentives	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Citizenship in New Land	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gibson 1999a

Methods	Random allocation: randomisation sequence generated using random number function on SAS	
Data	Medicaid subjects from families that included at least 1 member who had been enrolled continuously in the respective programme from July-Dec 1993	
Comparisons	1. Medicaid; No incentive 2. Medicaid; \$1 incentive 3. Medicaid; \$2 incentive 4. Basic Health Plan; No incentive 5. Basic Health Plan; \$1 6. Basic Health Plan; \$2 Non-respondents after second mailing were randomised to receive third mailing by certified mail or by 2-day priority mail	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Access and use of health services, demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. No information on allocation concealment provided	

Gibson 1999a (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gibson 1999b

Methods	Random allocation: randomisation sequence generated using random number function on SAS	
Data	BHP subjects from all families that included at least 1 member who had been enrolled continuously in the respective programme from July-Dec 1993	
Comparisons	1. Medicaid; No incentive 2. Medicaid; \$1 incentive 3. Medicaid; \$2 incentive 4. Basic Health Plan; No incentive 5. Basic Health Plan; \$1 6. Basic Health Plan; \$2 Non-respondents after second mailing were randomised to receive third mailing by certified mail or by 2-day priority mail	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Access to health services, use of services, satisfaction with services, demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. No information on allocation concealment provided	

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gibson 1999c

Methods	Random allocation: randomisation sequence generated using random number function on SAS	
Data	Non-responding Medicaid subjects from families that included at least 1 member who had been enrolled continuously in the respective programme from July-Dec 1993	
Comparisons	1. Certified mail 2. 2-day priority mail	

Gibson 1999c (Continued)

Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Access and use of health services, demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. No information on allocation concealment provided	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Giles 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Faculty members	
Comparisons	1. Combination format (CombF); Satisfaction items first (S1st); 2 demographic items (DI) 2. CombF; S1st; 4DI 3. CombF; S1st; 6DI 4. CombF; S1st; 8DI 5. CombF; S1st; 10DI 6. CombF; Demographic items first (D1st); 2DI 7. CombF; D1st; 4DI 8. CombF; D1st; 6DI 9. CombF; D1st; 8DI 10. CombF; D1st; 10DI 11. Categorical Format (CategF); S1st; 2DI 12. CategF; S1st; 4DI 13. CategF; S1st; 6DI 14. CategF; S1st; 8DI 15. CategF; S1st; 10DI 16. CategF; D1st; 2DI 17. CategF; D1st; 4DI 18. CategF; D1st; 6DI 19. CategF; D1st; 8DI 20. CategF; D1st; 10DI No follow up s used	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Job satisfaction	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Giles 1978 (Continued)

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gillpatrick 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Engineers identified from the subscriber list of a major trade journal	
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive 2. No incentive 3. Pre-contact 4. No pre-contact	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Market perceptions about CAD workstations	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gitelson 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Spectators at the Pennsylvania Farm Show who had not responded to 3 previous mailings of the questionnaire	
Comparisons	1. Non-personalised questionnaire; Regular post 2. Personalised questionnaire; Regular post 3. Personalised questionnaire; Certified post	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Economic impact of the farm show	

Gitelson 1992 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Glisan 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Farmers from 6 geographical regions	
Comparisons	1. Incentive - monetary 2. Incentive - results promised 3. Incentive - control 4. Colour - tan 5. Colour - blue 6. Colour - white 7. Stamp - commemorative 8. Stamp - regular	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Farm operations and costs	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Godwin 1979

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals in 60 countries	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$25	

Godwin 1979 (Continued)

	3. \$50 Participants were requested to return the questionnaire within 3 weeks. After 2 weeks a single follow-up letter with a copy of the questionnaire was sent to all respondents	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Family planning programmes	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Goldstein 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Subscribers to a travel magazine	
Comparisons	1. Postcard format first wave; Postcard format second wave 2. Form first wave; Form second wave 3. Postcard format first wave; Form second wave 4. Form first wave; Postcard format second wave	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Goodstadt 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Readers of Addictions Magazine	
Comparisons	1. 25 cent incentive 2. Free book incentive 3. Promise of free book 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Reading habits, magazine function served, the range and depth of subjects covered, overall design	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Green 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Teachers chosen from the Wyoming State Department of Education list of educators	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter 2. Non-personalised cover letter	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Courses taken in tests and measurement, attitudes towards standardised and classroom testing, interest in topics for in service training	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Green 1989

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	In-service teachers from the states of Wyoming and Nebraska	
Comparisons	1. Offer of a summary of results vs none 2. Personalisation vs No personalisation	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Application of research methods and findings to classroom teaching	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Green 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Randomly selected US social workers	
Comparisons	1. Demographic items placed at the beginning of the questionnaire 2. Demographic items placed at the end of the questionnaire	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Attitudes and beliefs about roles of family interaction and biological factors in mental illness	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 44.5 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Greer 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Senior sales executives (US)	
Comparisons	1. University sponsor; White questionnaire 2. University sponsor; Yellow questionnaire 3. University sponsor; Pink questionnaire 4. University sponsor; Green questionnaire 5. Commercial research sponsor; White questionnaire 6. Commercial research sponsor; Yellow questionnaire 7. Commercial research sponsor; Pink questionnaire 8. Commercial research sponsor; Green questionnaire 9. Academic honour society sponsor; White questionnaire 10. Academic honour society sponsor; Yellow questionnaire 11. Academic honour society sponsor; Pink questionnaire 12. Academic honour society sponsor; Green questionnaire 13. No sponsor (PO Box); White questionnaire 14. No sponsor (PO Box); Yellow questionnaire 15. No sponsor (PO Box); Pink questionnaire 16. No sponsor (PO Box); Green questionnaire Follow up sent after 3 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Company’s programme for sales people	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Griffith 1999

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	General medical internists in 5 Canadian provinces	
Comparisons	1. Open-ended questionnaire format 2. Close-ended questionnaire format	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Career satisfaction	

Griffith 1999 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 51.9 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Groeneman 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People listed in the telephone directories of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg, Canada selected using 'distinctive Jewish name sampling'	
Comparisons	1. \$1 bill enclosed 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Travel experience and attitudes towards future trips	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Groves 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Therapeutic recreation co-ordinators in the US	
Comparisons	1. Stamped addressed return envelope included 2. Self-adhering return address label (no envelope or postage) included	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	-	

Groves 2000 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gueguen 2003a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation	
Data	University students.	
Comparisons	1. Attractive photo in the e-mail 2. Medium attractive photo in the e-mail 3. No photo in the e-mail 4. Male signature 5. Female signature	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Dietary habits	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: E-mail	
Notes	Equal males and females; Language of publication is French	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Gueguen 2003b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation	
Data	Sample of individuals with e-mail addresses ending in ".fr" picked up randomly from the Internet using a specialised software	
Comparisons	1. Attractive photo in the e-mail 2. Medium attractive photo in the e-mail 3. Less attractive photo in the e-mail	

Gueguen 2003b (Continued)

	4. No photo in the e-mail 5. Male signature 6. Female signature	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Dietary habits	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: E-mail	
Notes	Language of publication is French	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Gullahorn 1959

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Former Fulbright & Smith-Mundt grantees who had not responded to earlier mailing of the questionnaire	
Comparisons	1. Follow-up mailings by special delivery 2. Follow-up mailings by standard mail	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Bibliography of works emanating form Fulbright and Smith-Mundt awards	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gullahorn 1963

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Former Fulbright and Smith-Mundt grantees	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire printed on green paper, sent by first class mail, with business reply return envelope 2. Green paper; first class, stamped return envelope 3. Green paper, third class mail, business reply return envelope 4. Green paper, third class mail, return envelope stamped 5. White paper, first class mail, business reply return envelope 6. White paper, first class, return envelope stamped 7. White paper, third class mail, business reply return envelope 8. White paper, third class mail, return envelope stamped	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	-	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Gupta 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Medical practitioners	
Comparisons	1. Telephone prompt by medical researcher 2. Telephone prompt by an experienced non-medical research assistant	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Views about clinical practice guidelines	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Gupta 1997 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Göritz 2004a

Methods	Random allocation: using computerised random number generation
Data	Panellists from the German commercial online access panel
Comparisons	1. 7 X 100 (700) German Mark (DM) money lottery 2. 14 X 50 (700) DM money lottery 3. 5 X 100 (500) DM money lottery 4. 10 X 50 (500) DM money lottery 5. 3 X 100 (300) DM money lottery 6. 6 X 50 (300) DM money lottery 7. 1 X 100 (100) DM money lottery 8. 2 X 50 (100) DM money lottery 9. 8 Bonus Point (BP) (1 BP is worth 50 DM) 10. 6 BP 11. 4 BP 12. 3 BP 13. Gift lottery (3 watches/5 CD-jackets/5 alarm clocks/25 key-ring torches)
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Personal Internet usage
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Göritz 2004b

Methods	Random allocation: using computerised random number generation
Data	Panellists from the German commercial online access panel
Comparisons	1. 2 X 90 (180) German Mark (DM) 2. 6 X 30 DM money lottery 3. 1 X 90 DM money lottery 4. 3 X 30 DM money lottery

Göritz 2004b (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of media contents	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Hackler 1973

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Mothers of ninth or tenth grade students living in 1 neighbourhood of Edmonton	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$1 bill incentive After 11 days, the no incentive group received \$1 and the incentive group received a follow-up phone call	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Community cohesiveness	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Halpern 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	General internists and family practitioners randomly selected from the American Medical Association's master file of physicians	

Halpern 2002 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. \$10, peppermint candy and large outgoing envelope 2. \$10, no peppermint candy, large outgoing envelope 3. \$10, peppermint candy, small outgoing envelope 4. \$10, no peppermint candy, small outgoing envelope 5. \$5, peppermint candy and large outgoing envelope 6. \$5, no peppermint candy, large outgoing envelope 7. \$5, peppermint candy, small outgoing envelope 8. \$5, no peppermint candy, small outgoing envelope	
Outcomes	Response within 11 weeks	
Topic	Health: Views about comparative merits of placebo controlled versus active controlled trials of anti-hypertensive drugs	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hancock 1940

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed on the personal tax records of the county assessors	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire and cover letter 2. As above with 25 cents incentive 3. As above with promise of 25 cents on return of questionnaire 4. Personal interview	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	-	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Hancock 1940 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Hansen 1980

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Individuals listed in the telephone directory (Columbus, Ohio)
Comparisons	1. No pre-contact; Short form (SF) 2. No pre-contact; Long form (LF) 3. Yes/no foot in the door; SF 4. Yes/no foot in the door; LF 5. Probe foot in the door; SF 6. Probe foot in the door; LF
Outcomes	Response within 35 days
Topic	Non-health: Consumer's attitudes towards recent new car purchases. CHECK
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hansen RA 1980

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Safety engineers employed by firms that require employees to wear safety hardhats
Comparisons	1. 25 cent incentive 2. Pen incentive 3. Control group
Outcomes	Response within 38 days
Topic	Non-health: Product evaluation and information
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Hansen RA 1980 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Harris 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A randomly selected sample of respondents	
Comparisons	1. Business reply return envelope enclosed 2. Stamped reply envelope enclosed	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Harrison 2002

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Adults selected from a Health Authority Register (North West England)	
Comparisons	1. Reply envelope with first class stamp 2. Pre-paid business-franked reply envelope	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Health questionnaire	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Mostly 18-45 years; Equal male and females	

Harrison 2002 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Harrison 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation	
Data	Patients referred to a community based exercise referral scheme	
Comparisons	1. Pre-warning latter 2.No pre-warning letter	
Outcomes	Response rate at 6 weeks	
Topic	Health: Quality of services offered at the community based referral scheme	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Harvey 1986

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	A random sample of people living in the West Midlands, UK, listed on the electoral register	
Comparisons	1. Reply envelope with first class stamp 2. Reply envelope with second class stamp	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Interest in fine art	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	

Harvey 1986 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Hawkins 1979

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Eugene residences listed in the Eugene-Springfield telephone director	
Comparisons	1. Department store sponsor; Standard 2. Department store sponsor; Disclosure 3. Research firm sponsor; Standard 4. Research firm sponsor; Disclosure 5. University sponsor, Standard 6. University sponsor, Disclosure	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Women's attitudes to shopping, demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Heaton 1965

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals living in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area who had purchased a new 1959 Chevrolet within the previous 12-16 weeks	
Comparisons	1. Preliminary letter 2. No preliminary letter	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Information on automobile ownership, shopping behaviour	

Heaton 1965 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Heerwegh 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: using SAS RANUNI function	
Data	1st year students at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	
Comparisons	1. Personalised salutations 2. Non-personalised salutations	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Adolescents attitudes towards marriage and divorce	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Age: 17-20 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate.

Heerwegh 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: using SAS RANUNI function	
Data	1st year students at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	
Comparisons	1. Personalised salutations 2. Non-personalised salutations	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Adolescents attitudes towards marriage and divorce	

Heerwegh 2005b (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Heerwegh 2006

Methods	Random allocation: using SAS RANUNI function	
Data	Freshmen at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	
Comparisons	1. Personalised salutations 2. Non-personalised salutations	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards immigrants and asylum seekers	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate.

Hendrick 1972

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in the city directory (Akron, Ohio)	
Comparisons	1. 1-page questionnaire; Solicitor ingratiate (SI); Respondent ingratiate (RI) 2. 1-page questionnaire, SI; Respondent no ingratiate (RNI) 3. 1-page questionnaire; Solicitor no ingratiate (SNI); RI 4. 1-page questionnaire; SNI; RNI 5. 7-page questionnaire; SI; RI 6. 7-page questionnaire; SI; RNI 7. 7-page questionnaire; SNI; RI	

Hendrick 1972 (Continued)

	8. 7-page questionnaire; SNI; RNI	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Repression - sensitisation personality scale	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hendriks 2001

Methods	Random allocation; alternation	
Data	784 consecutively discharged patients from 8 randomly chosen hospital wards at the Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam	
Comparisons	1. 10-step evaluation scale (E10) 2. 5-step evaluation, tick box scale (E5-B) 3. 5-step evaluation, circle answer scale (E5-W) 4. 5-step satisfaction, tick box scale (S5-B) 5. 5- step satisfaction, circle answer scale (S5-W).	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Sa tisfaction with hospital care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Henley 1976

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of Fort Worth, Texas
Comparisons	1. 1 by 4-inch slip of paper saying 'Please return by April 7th' stapled to the questionnaire 2. No deadline slip
Outcomes	Response within 14 days
Topic	Non-health: Civil issues
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hensley 1974

Methods	Random allocation: alternation
Data	Members of the National Forensic League
Comparisons	1. Outer-envelope (OE) commemorative Inner-envelope (IE) commemorative 2. OE commemorative; IE regular 3. OE commemorative; IE metered 4. OE regular; IE commemorative 5. OE regular; IE regular 6. OE regular; IE metered 7. OE metered; IE commemorative 8. OE metered; IE regular 9. OE metered; IE metered
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Hensley 1974 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Hewett 1974

Methods	Random allocation: coin toss	
Data	Individuals listed in a telephone directory	
Comparisons	1. Hand-stamped outgoing envelope; Hand-stamped return envelope 2. Hand-stamped outgoing envelope; First class postal permit business reply envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Hoffman 1998

Methods	Random allocation: using terminal digit of study number or house number	
Data	Individuals who had previously participated in a campaign to collect blood for a specimen bank	
Comparisons	Study 1: 1. Short questionnaire 2. Long questionnaire Study 2: 1. No incentive 2. Newspaper article 3. Pencil 4. Pencil and newspaper article Study 3: 1. Postcard reminder 2. Second questionnaire and letter.	
Outcomes	-	

Hoffman 1998 (Continued)

Topic	Health: Family history of Cancer, reproductive history, medical and Vitamin use, history of medical conditions and surgery	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hopkins 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Professional school and public librarians	
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive 2. No incentive Non-responders followed-up after 1 month	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes and practices having a book in Spanish in the library	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hornik 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in a telephone directory (Chicago, US)	
Comparisons	1. Given time cue of 20 mins 2. Given time cue of 40 mins 3. Not given time cue	

Hornik 1981 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes to TV advertising	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hornik 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified.
Data	Individuals listed in a telephone directory (Chicago, US)
Comparisons	1. Ingratiation appeal made in Pre-notification telephone call (IA) - Male telephone pre-notified to Male respondent (M/M) 2. IA - M/F 3. IA - F/M 4. IA - F/F 5. Polite imperative (PI) - M/M 6. PI - M/F 7. PI - F/M 8. PI - F/F 9. Rhetorical question (RQ) - M/M 10. RQ - M/F 11. RQ - F/M 12. RQ - F/F 13. Statement (S) - M/M 14. S - M/F 15. S - F/M 16. S - F/F 17. No pre-notification.
Outcomes	-
Topic	Non-health: People's attitudes to television and advertising
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-
<i>Risk of bias</i>	

Hornik 1982 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Horowitz 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Faculty members of the University of Maryland (US)
Comparisons	1. Status of researcher 'professor' (P); Ink Signature (I); Reproduction photocopied (R-P) 2. Graduate Student (GS); I; R-P 3. P; Non-Ink (N-I); R-P 4. GS; N-I; R-P 5. P; I; Reproduction mimeographed (R-M) 6. GS; I; R-M 7. P; N-I; R-M 8. GS; N-I; R-M 9. P; I; R-T 10. GS; I; R-T
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: College professors Questionnaire
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Houston 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	New car buyers in Scott County, Iowa (US)
Comparisons	1. Personalised letter and questionnaire; Ball-point pen incentive 2. Personalised letter and questionnaire; No incentive 3. Non-personalised; Ball-point pen incentive 4. Non-personalised; No incentive
Outcomes	-

Houston 1975 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Sources of information used by the respondent in purchasing their new car	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Houston 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Households listed in a telephone directory (Madison)	
Comparisons	1. University Sponsor; Social Utility Appeal 2. Commercial Sponsor, Social Utility Appeal 3. University Sponsor, Help the Sponsor Appeal 4. Commercial Sponsor, Help the Sponsor Appeal 5. University Sponsor, Egoistic Appeal 6. Commercial Sponsor, Egoistic Appeal 7. University Sponsor, Combined Appeal 8. Commercial Sponsor, Combined Appeal	
Outcomes	Response within 1 month	
Topic	Non-health: Tap consumer images and behaviour with respect to 5 Madison-area shopping	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hubbard 1988a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residents of a major Midwestern metropolitan area	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. Promise of \$1 donation to charity of respondent's choice 3. 25 cents cash enclosed 4. \$1 cash enclosed 5. Opportunity to win \$200 cash prize	
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Satisfaction with banking and /financial services	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hubbard 1988b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents of a major Midwestern metropolitan area
Comparisons	1. Control 2. Pre-paid 25 cent incentive 3. Pre-paid \$1 incentive 4. Opportunity to win cash prize of \$50 5. Opportunity to win cash prize of \$100 6. Opportunity to win cash prize of \$150 7. Opportunity to win cash prize of \$200 8. Opportunity to win cash prize of \$50
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Satisfaction with banking and financial services
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-
<i>Risk of bias</i>	

Hubbard 1988b (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Huck 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students living in residence halls at the university of Tennessee	
Comparisons	1. First mailing with 25 cents incentive 2. Second mailing (to non-respondents) with 25 cents incentive 3. Third mailing (to non-respondents) with 25 cents incentive 4. First, second and third mailings without 25 cents incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Rokeach Dogmatism scale	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Hyett 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residential telephone subscribers	
Comparisons	1. Double-sided questionnaire 2. Single-sided questionnaire After 2 weeks all non-responders received another questionnaire. 1 week later all those who still had not responded were followed up by telephone	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Hyett 1977 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Iglesias 2000

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Women aged 70 years and over	
Comparisons	1. 4-page questionnaire 2. 5-page questionnaire 3. 7-page questionnaire	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Clinical questionnaire, EuroEoL, SF-12	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Above 70 years; Mainly females	

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Iglesias 2001

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Women aged 70 years or over selected from 2 general practices in North Yorkshire	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire with an individual item format 2. Questionnaire with a stem & leaf format	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: SF12	
Mode of Administration	Postal.	
Notes	Age: Above 70 years; Mainly females	

Iglesias 2001 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Jacobs 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Public school teachers (Indiana, US)	
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire; Optical scan form 2. Short questionnaire; Instructed to respond directly on questionnaire 3. Long questionnaire; Optical scan form 4. Long questionnaire; Instructed to respond directly on questionnaire Postcard follow up after 2 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes and opinions concerning discipline in the public schools	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jacoby 1990

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals from 10 parliamentary areas (ISSMC questionnaires) Individuals from the electoral register (FPC questionnaires)	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire; Sent by ISSMC 2. Long questionnaire; Sent by FPC 3. Short questionnaire; Sent by ISSMC 4. Short questionnaire; Sent by FPC 1. Questionnaire included sensitive question; Sent by ISSMC 2. Questionnaire did not include sensitive question; Sent by ISSMC 3. Questionnaire included sensitive question; Sent by FPC	

Jacoby 1990 (Continued)

	4. Questionnaire did not include sensitive question; Sent by FPC	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

James 1990a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Cable television subscribers (Fairfax County, Virginia, US)	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$0.25 3. \$50 4. \$1 5. \$2 3 follow-up reminders sent without further monetary incentive at 3 week intervals	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Personal information.	
Mode of Administration	Postal.	
Notes	Author contacted: On the third follow up , participants were randomised to receive the questionnaire by first class or certified mailing but no data given for results	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

James 1990b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Cable television subscribers who had failed to respond to 2 previous follow up attempts
Comparisons	1. Reminder by certified mail 2. Reminder by first class mail
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Personal information
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

James 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Members of a national trade association of owners of construction subcontracting companies who were not currently enrolled in the association's health insurance programme
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$1 cash 3. \$5 cash 4. \$5 cheque 5. \$10 cheque 6. \$20 cheque 7. \$40 cheque 8. Promise of \$50 1-page questionnaire, cover letter and business reply envelope. Reminders sent to non respondents at 3-week intervals
Outcomes	-
Topic	Health: Health insurance
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

James 1992 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jamtvedt 2008

Methods	Random allocation: block randomisation by computer generated table	
Data	Norwegian Physiotherapists from private practice	
Comparisons	1. Dark chocolate 2. Control Group	
Outcomes	Response period within 9 months	
Topic	Health: Treatment provided to 1 patient with osteoarthritis of knee through 12 treatment sessions	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Randomisation was generated by Doris Tove Kristoffersen, who is not involved with any other aspect of the trial	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Jenkinson 2003

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Recently discharged patients from 2 English inner city NHS Trusts	
Comparisons	1. 4-page questionnaire 2. 12-page questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Picker Patient Experience Questionnaire	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Jenkinson 2003 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jensen 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Female graduates from the doctoral program in education from a private west-coast university (US)	
Comparisons	1. Open-ended questions first; Closed questions next; Demographic questions last 2. Open; Demographic; Closed 3. Closed; Open; Demographic 4. Closed; Demographic; Open 5. Demographic; Open; Closed 6. Demographic; Closed; Open Reminders sent at 6 and 12 weeks. Some graduates were living out of the country at the time of the study. They were sent postal vouchers and an envelope instead of a stamped envelope on the initial mailing and first follow up. On the second follow up, US citizens received a telephone call while overseas received another postal mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Graduate school experiences	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 31-65; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jepson 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel	
Data	US Primary care physician members of the American Medical Association	
Comparisons	1. Word count - 849 2. Word count - 1145 3. Word count - 1163 4. Word count - 1164 5. Word count - 1215 6. Word count - 1216	

Jepson 2005a (Continued)

	7. Word count - 1234 8. Word count -1423 9. Word count - 1424 10. Word count - 1447 11. Word count - 1449 12. Word count - 1461 13. Word count - 1462 14. Word count - 1494 15. Word count - 1496 16. Word count - 1519 17. Word count - 1520 18. Word count - 1560 19. Word count - 1561 20. Word count - 1703 21. Word count - 1706 22. Word count - 1737 23. Word count - 1744 24. Word count - 1756 25. Word count - 1776 26. Word count - 1785 27. Word count - 1788 28. Word count - 1807 29. Word count - 1855 30. Word count - 1867	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards cost quality trade-offs in clinical practice	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Short length: From word count 849 - 1234; Long length: From word count 1423 - 1867; Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
Risk of bias		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Jepson 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel
Data	US Primary care physician members of the American Medical Association

Jepson 2005b (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Word count - 564 2. Word count - 574 3. Word count - 649 4. Word count - 703 5. Word count - 711 6. Word count - 715 7. Word count - 719 8. Word count -730 9. Word count - 749 10. Word count - 753 11. Word count - 754 12. Word count - 762 13. Word count - 782 14. Word count - 849 15. Word count - 905 16. Word count - 988	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards cost quality trade-offs in clinical practice	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Short length: From word count 564 to 730; Long length: From word count 749 to 905; Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Jobber 1983

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Textile companies listed in the Kompass-Directory of UK Companies and 'Times Top 500'	
Comparisons	1. Prior letter; White questionnaire 2. Prior letter; Blue questionnaire 3. No prior letter; White questionnaire 4. No prior letter; Blue questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Information about the marketing strategies employed by the company	

Jobber 1983 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jobber 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Senior marketing executives	
Comparisons	1. Cover letter contained offer of a free copy of results as the final paragraph of the body of the letter 2. Same cover letter but offer made in typed postscript 3. Same cover letter but offer made in hand-written postscript 4. Cover letter with no offer	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Explore the design and extent of implementation of marketing information system	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jobber 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Building society chief executives	
Comparisons	1. 20 pence incentive; No booklet 2. 20 pence incentive; Booklet explaining survey included 3. No incentive; No booklet 4. No incentive; Booklet explaining survey included	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Jobber 1988 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Ascertain management practices, and contextual and structural characteristics of societies	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Number of subjects allocated to each intervention group ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jobber 1989

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	Industrial goods companies	
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire; 1-sided printing 2. Short questionnaire; 2-sided printing 3. Long questionnaire; 1-sided printing 4. Long questionnaire; 2-sided printing The long questionnaire comprised 2 different versions of a short questionnaire. The 2 versions were allocated randomly between treatments	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Selling approach and orientations used by the sample firms, evaluate the sale persons, size of firm, industry category, number of sales persons employed	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jobber D 1985

Methods	Random allocation: systematic random sampling	
Data	Quality control managers of textile companies randomly selected from a directory of UK companies	
Comparisons	1. No pre-notification 2. Telephone pre-notification	
Outcomes	Response prior to second wave of the experiment	
Topic	Non-health: Quality management systems used by UK textile companies	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Johansson 1997a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Norwegian citizens aged 16-79 years	
Comparisons	1. No reward offered 2. Reward offered 1 reminder sent after 4 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Quantitative Food Frequency Questionnaire (QFFQ)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 42-47	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Johansson 1997b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Norwegian citizens aged 16-79 years	
Comparisons	1. No reward offered 2. Reward offered 1 reminder sent after 4 weeks	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Quantitative Food Frequency Questionnaire (QFFQ)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 42-47	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Johansson 1997c

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Norwegian citizens aged 16-79 years who had not responded to a questionnaire	
Comparisons	1. Follow up by telephone 2. Follow up by post	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Quantitative Food Frequency Questionnaire (QFFQ)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 42-47	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

John 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Cosmetologists aged 22 to 36 years	
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive in first mailing 2. \$1 incentive in second mailing 3. No incentive 2- page questionnaire, cover letter, survey fact sheet and stamped addressed envelope. Reminder postcard sent 1 week after first mailing	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Screening questions - recent health problems, reproductive history; outcome of the most recent pregnancy	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 22-36; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Joinson 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel	
Data	Students at the Open University, UK	
Comparisons	1. Salutation - 'Dear Student' 2. Salutation - 'Dear Open University Student' 3. Salutation - 'Dear Forename' (e.g. Dear John) 4. Salutation - 'Dear Forename Surname' (e.g. Dear John Doe)	
Outcomes	Response within 14 days	
Topic	Non-health: Volunteering to become a member of a survey panel (PRESTO)	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: E-mail	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Joinson 2005a (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate
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Joinson 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel
Data	Students at the Open University, UK
Comparisons	1. Salutation - 'Dear Student' 2. Salutation - 'Dear Open University Student' 3. Salutation - 'Dear Forename' (e.g. Dear John) 4. Salutation - 'Dear Forename Surname' (e.g. Dear John Doe)
Outcomes	Response within 14 days
Topic	Non-health: Inviting the existing panel members to exit the panel
Mode of Administration	Electronic: E-mail
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Joinson 2005c

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel
Data	Students at the Open University, UK
Comparisons	1. Salutation - 'Dear Student' 2. Salutation - 'Dear Forename' (e.g. Dear John) 3. Salutation - 'Dear Forename Surname' (e.g. Dear John Doe) 4. High Power - "From Professor (name), Pro-Vice chancellor, (Strategy, planning and partnerships), The OU 5. Neutral Power - "From (name), (Strategy, planning and partnerships), The OU
Outcomes	Response within 14 days
Topic	Non-health: Inviting the panel members to complete the survey
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey

Joinson 2005c (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Joinson 2007a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel	
Data	Members of an online student panel at the Open University, UK	
Comparisons	1. High Power - “From Professor (name), Pro-Vice chancellor, (Strategy, planning and partnerships), The OU 2. Neutral Power - ”From (name), (Strategy, planning and partnerships), The OU 3. Salutation - ’Dear Forename’ (e.g. Dear John) 4. Salutation - ’Dear Presto panel member’	
Outcomes	Response within 14 days	
Topic	Non-health: Socio-economic status	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mean age: 41.8 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Joinson 2007b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel	
Data	Members of an online student panel at the Open University, UK	
Comparisons	1. Personalised URL (Unique URL with identifier encoded in the link) 2. Authentication required (URL requires log-on to access the survey)	
Outcomes	Response within 14 days	

Joinson 2007b (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Part-time student costs and fees	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Mean age: 43.6 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Jones 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals who had planned group conventions and/or meetings	
Comparisons	1. Science appeal (SA); Commemorative stamp (CS); J&L sponsor (J&L) 2. SA; CS; University sponsor (US) 3. SA; CS; Government sponsor (GS) 4. SA; Regular stamp (RS); J&L 5. SA; RS; US 6. SA; RS; GS 7. SA; Business reply envelope (BR); J&L 8. SA; BR; US 9. SA; BR; GS 10. User appeal (UA); CS; J&L 11. UA; CS; US 12. UA; CS; GS 13. UA; RS; J&L 14. UA; RS; US 15. UA; RS; GS 16. UA; BR; J&L 17. UA; BR; US 18. UA; BR; GS 19. Resort park appeal (RA); CS; J&L 20. RA; CS; US 21. RA; CS; GS 22. RA; RS; J&L 23. RA; RS; US 24. RA; RS; GS 25. RA; BR; J&L 26. RA; BR; US 27. RA; BR; GA	
Outcomes	Response within 6 weeks	

Jones 1978 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Characteristics of the group, respondent attitudes towards meeting facilities, demographic factors	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Jones 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adult patients admitted for treatment between 14/09/98 and12/12/98	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$2 3. \$5 4. SF-36 5. SF-12 6. MH-5 7. MH-1	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Health status survey	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Junghans 2005

Methods	Random allocation: using minimisation software
Data	2 general practices in England
Comparisons	1. Opt-in (asked to actively signal willingness to participate in research) 2. Opt-out (contacted repeatedly unless they signalled unwillingness to participate)
Outcomes	Response period within 2 weeks
Topic	Health: Patients with angina
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	The identity of the trial was kept in a sealed envelope and was known only to the research assistant

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Kahle 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Psychiatrists and clinical psychologists
Comparisons	Experiment 1: 1. Dillman's 3-wave mailing design 2. As (1) except first 2 waves received non-profit bulk rate permit number printed where stamp had been 3. As (2) except pre-printed labels used to address envelopes rather than addresses typed individually on envelopes Experiment 2: As experiment 1 but in final wave questionnaire sent by: 1. Certified mail 2. First class mail
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Involuntary civil commitments
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Kahle 1978 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Kalafatis 1995

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation
Data	Danish participants in a non-price-based promotion that utilised an American sporting theme
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No incentives 2. Unconditional 5% value of coupon 3. Unconditional 10% value of coupon 4. Unconditional 15% value of coupon 5. Conditional 5% value of coupon 6. Conditional 10% value of coupon 7. Conditional 15% value of coupon 8. Free gift 9. No free gift.
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Sports - promotional offers, viewing patterns of sports programmes, shopping habits of sports goods and perceptions of different sports
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kalantar 1999

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Residents of Western Sydney, Australia
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Long questionnaire (7 pages) 2. Short questionnaire (1 page) 3. Scratch lottery worth \$1 to win up to \$2500 4. No lottery
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Bowel function and faecal incontinence

Kalantar 1999 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Kaplan 1970a

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Residents of Boston and Brockton, Massachusetts, USA	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire 3. Impersonal letter (no inside address and the salutation is 'Dear Madam') 4. Personal letter (with complete address and the salutation is 'Dear Mrs. name') 5. Stamped return envelope 6. Franked return envelope 7. Non-specific signer 8. Jewish signer 9. Irish signer	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Reproductive history and the use of oral contraceptives	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 20-70 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Kaplan 1970b

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Residents of Boston and Brockton, Massachusetts, USA	
Comparisons	1. Irish signer 2. Irish, Professor signer 3. Non-specific signer	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Reproductive history and the use of oral contraceptives	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 20-70 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Kaplowitz 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Residential and agricultural landowners in the Sycamore creek watershed, USA	
Comparisons	1. Survey instrument - Colour 2. Survey instrument - Black and White	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Homeowner preferences for watershed management practices	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Kasprzyk 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Sample of the general internists listed on the American Medical Association files who spend time on direct patient care, deal with STD diagnosis and have a listed mailing address
Comparisons	1. First class mailing; No incentive 2. First class mailing; \$15 cash 3. First class mailing; \$25 cash 4. FedEx mailing; No incentive 5. FedEx mailing; \$15 cash 6. FedEx mailing; \$25 cash
Outcomes	Response after final reminder mailing, 8 weeks after initial survey
Topic	Health: Physician and practice characteristics, STD diagnosis, treatment and control practice, opinions about STD reporting requirements and partner notification
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kawash 1971

Methods	Random allocation: using table of random numbers
Data	Faculty members of University of Illinois
Comparisons	1. Personal signature 2. Mimeographed facsimile
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards audiovisual instructional materials
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Kawash 1971 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate
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Keeter 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Attorneys, clinical social workers, college and university faculty, staff and students, employees and employers in business organisations and a sample of physicians
Comparisons	1. White questionnaire 2. Pink questionnaire 3. Green questionnaire
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Purchase of major medical equipments Non-health: Housing market, parking and ridesharing, workload, distribution of time, attitudes
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Results of 7 different studies all examining the same intervention over a 14- month period

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kenyon 2005

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Mothers of the MRC ORACLE Trial that evaluated the use of antibiotics to improve neonatal outcome after preterm labour/preterm rupture of the membrane
Comparisons	1. £5 voucher 2. No voucher
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Child's health and development
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Kenyon 2005 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Keown 1985a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Japanese business executives	
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards business risk	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Keown 1985b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Business executives (Hong Kong)	
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards business risk	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Keown 1985b (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Kephart 1958

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Women who had passed their Pennsylvania State Nursing Board exams
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular stamp; No preview or follow up 2. Preview sent 1 week prior to questionnaire 3. Follow up (duplicate questionnaire, letter and return envelope) 4. Preview and follow up 5. Air mail stamp 6. Special delivery mail 7. Incentive of a penny 8. Incentive of a nickel 9. Incentive of a dime 10. Incentive of a quarter
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards nursing profession
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kerin 1976

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Corporate presidents from 'Fortune 500' firms
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual cover letter; Altruistic appeal; Stamp on return envelope 2. Individual; Altruistic; No stamp 3. individual; Egoistic appeal; Stamp 4. individual; Egoistic; No stamp 5. Form cover letter; Altruistic; Stamp 6. Form cover letter; Altruistic; No stamp 7. Form; Egoistic; Stamp 8. Form; Egoistic; No stamp

Kerin 1976 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Product recall practices	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kerin 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Senior marketing executives	
Comparisons	1. Offered results 2. Not offered results	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Interaction between sales and advertising functions in the design and execution of promotion strategy	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kernan 1971

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residents of Cincinnati	
Comparisons	1. Personalised address; First class 2. Personalised address; Bulk rate 3. Occupant address; First class	

Kernan 1971 (Continued)

	4. Occupant address; Bulk rate	
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Community’s general interest in new sports stadium	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kindra 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Households listed in a telephone directory (Montreal, Canada)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-contact; Lottery incentive 2. No pre-contact; Lottery incentive 3. Pre-contact; No lottery incentive 4. No pre-contact; No lottery incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Elicit consumer response to product advertising	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

King 1978

Methods	Random allocation: systematic sampling procedure with random start
Data	Registered bank holding companies
Comparisons	1. Cover letter most personalised 2. Cover letter least personalised
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Koloski 2001

Methods	Random allocation: random block procedure
Data	People aged 18 years and above listed on the 1996 Local Government electoral role, Penrith, Australia
Comparisons	1. Short (28 page) questionnaire; Lottery card included 2. Short questionnaire; No lottery card 3. Long questionnaire (32 pages); Lottery card included 4. Long questionnaire; No lottery card
Outcomes	Response after 8 phases of follow up
Topic	Health: Questions on common health problems especially on stomach and bowel, Delusions Symptoms States Inventory, SF-12
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Age: 41.9-46.6 years; Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Koo 1995

Methods	Random allocation: random function in Microsoft Excel programme
Data	Girls recruited by volunteers from the Canadian Cancer Society
Comparisons	1. Real signature on cover letter 2. Printed signature
Outcomes	Response within 105 days
Topic	Health: Dietary and life style determinants of the onset of menarche
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Allocation was not concealed; Age: 7.5-14.9 years; Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Koo 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Girls recruited by volunteers from the Canadian Cancer Society who had not responded in a previous study
Comparisons	1. Regular reminder letter 2. Reminder letter with telephone reminder indicated 3. Reminder letter with telephone interview indicated
Outcomes	Response within 16 days (prior to telephone interview)
Topic	Health: Dietary and life style determinants of the onset of menarche
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Age: 8.7-16.2 years; Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kropf 2005

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in Maryland	
Comparisons	1. \$5 incentive 2. No incentive 3. Cover letter - Norms of co-operation (answering the survey would help many other people) 4. Cover letter - Norms of self-intrest (cooperation would help the survey respondent himself or herself)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Health care and other current issues	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kurth 1987

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	Employees of the Maricopa Community Colleges with e-mail accounts	
Comparisons	1. Type-written; Sensitive question 2. Type-written; No sensitive question	
Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Non-health: Supervisory management	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kuskowska-Wolk 1992

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	Women aged 40-70 years from 2 medium-sized towns in Uppsala Health Care Region invited for mam-mography over the period 13 October 1986 to 20 March 1987	
Comparisons	1. Increasing order of food frequencies; No column on portion sizes; No extra page of questions 2. Decreasing order of food frequencies; No column on portion sizes; No extra page of questions 3. Increasing order of food frequencies; Column on portion sizes; No extra page of questions 4. Decreasing order of food frequencies; Column on portion sizes; No extra page of questions 5. Increasing order of food frequencies; No column on portion sizes; Extra page of questions 6. Decreasing order of food frequencies; No column on portion sizes; Extra page of questions 7. Increasing order of food frequencies; Column on portion sizes; Extra page of questions 8. Decreasing order of food frequencies; Column on portion sizes; Extra page of questions	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Food Frequency Questionnaire	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 54.9-55.6 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Kypri 2003

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Tertiary students at the University of Otago	
Comparisons	1. Ball-point pen worth \$0.50 2. Pen + Cookie voucher worth \$1 3. Pen + Lunch voucher worth \$5 4. Pen + Lunch voucher worth \$5 on completion of the survey.	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Alcohol use	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web survey	
Notes	Age: 16-29 years; Mainly females	

Kypri 2003 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

La Garce 1995

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Goodyear tyre and rubber dealers	
Comparisons	1. Standard questionnaire printed in black and white 2. Standard questionnaire printed in blue and yellow 3. User-friendly format questionnaire printed in black and white 4. User-friendly format questionnaire printed in blue and yellow	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Industry	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Labaree 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	400 people recently discharged from hospital	
Comparisons	1. Postal questionnaire, no follow up 2. Postal questionnaire with follow up	
Outcomes	Response within 2 months	
Topic	Health: Patient Satisfaction	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Labaree 2000 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Labrecque 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Service customers of a marina	
Comparisons	1. Owner's signature (OS); Personalised (P); Commemorative stamp (CS) 2. Service manager's signature (SMS); P; CS 3. OS; Not personalised (NP); CS 4. SMS; NP; CS 5. OS; P; No CS 6. SMS; P; No CS 7. OS; NP; No CS 8. SMS; NP; No CS	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Reaction of customers to the performance of its service department	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Lavelle 2008

Methods	Random allocation: using SPSS	
Data	Patients attending breast clinics in Greater Manchester between 1/10/2002 - 31/7/2003	
Comparisons	1. First class stamp on addressed reply envelope 2. Pre-paid addressed reply envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Lavelle 2008 (Continued)

Topic	Health: Functional health status - ELPHS ADL; Generic health status - SF-12; Health related quality of life - EORTC QLQ-C30	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Leece 2006a

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Surgeon members of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association	
Comparisons	1. Standard cover letter 2. Test cover letter (more personal)	
Outcomes	Response period is 6 weeks	
Topic	Health: Preferences in the treatment of femoral neck fractures	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Leece 2006b

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Surgeon members of the Orthopaedic Trauma Association	
Comparisons	1. Standard cover letter 2. Test cover letter (more personal)	
Outcomes	Response period is 6 weeks	

Leece 2006b (Continued)

Topic	Health: Preferences in the treatment of femoral neck fractures	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: E-mail	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Leigh Brown 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Patients who had already responded a questionnaire about hospital attendance	
Comparisons	1. Aware of monthly prize draw offering £25 gift voucher 2. Unaware of monthly prize draw offering £25 gift voucher	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Health status, satisfaction with orthopaedic referral	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Leung 2002

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Physicians randomly selected from the full and limited registration lists of the Hong Kong medical council	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$10 cash 3. \$20 cash 4. \$40 cash 5. Entry into \$1000 lottery	

Leung 2002 (Continued)

	6. Entry into \$2000 lottery 7. Entry into \$4000 lottery	
Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Health: Nature of practice, remuneration, clinical and administrative task	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Leung 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Physicians randomly selected from the full and limited registration lists of the Hong Kong medical council	
Comparisons	1. Prepayment HK\$ 20 2. Post-payment HK\$ 20	
Outcomes	Response within 60 days	
Topic	Health: Computerisation of clinical and administrative tasks	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Linsky 1965

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Nurses
Comparisons	1. Characteristics of cover letter: personalised (P); social utility appeal (SU); explanation of place and importance of respondent in study (RP); an appeal to help researchers of study (HR) 2. Not P; SU; RP; HR 3. P; Not SU; RP; HR 4. Not P; Not SU; RP; HR 5. P; SU; Not RP; HR 6. Not P; SU; Not RP; HR 7. P; SU; RP; Not HR 8. Not P; SU; RP; Not HR 9. P; Not SU; Not RP; HR 10. Not P; Not SU; Not RP; HR 11. P; Not SU; RP; Not HR 12. Not P; Not SU; RP; Not HR 13. P; SU; Not RP; Not HR 14. Not P; SU; Not RP; Not HR 15. P; Not SU; Not RP; Not HR 16. Not P; Not SU; Not RP; Not HR
Outcomes	Response within 3 weeks
Topic	Health: Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Little 1990

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation
Data	Respondents to a national magazine clip ad promotion
Comparisons	1. 25-cent 2. Pan-scrapper 3. Control
Outcomes	Response period not specified

Little 1990 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Perceptions of the product and follow-up service to competing products	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

London 1990a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Electronics design engineers	
Comparisons	1. Standard cover letter 2. As (1) but also told would be entered into a prize draw for 3 calculators if responded 3. As (2) but also told that all respondents would receive a special gift from the sponsor	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Potential customers needs, firm usage, sources of transformers and inductors	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

London 1990b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Electronics design engineers	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$1 incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

London 1990b (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Potential customers needs, firm usage, sources of transformers and inductors	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Lorenzi 1988

Methods	Random allocation: methods not specified	
Data	Business executives, state legislators, and director of chambers of commerce from the Midwestern United States	
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$1 payoff 2. Conditional \$2 payoff 3. Lottery to win \$50, \$30, or \$20 4. No incentives	
Outcomes	Response within 14 days	
Topic	Non-health: Finance - Financial investment scenario, behavioural self-description measure of propensity for risk in personal and business investments	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 49.7 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Lund 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Norwegian women aged 34-49 years	

Lund 1998 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Questionnaire entitled 'Women Lifestyle & Health'; 4 pages 2. Questionnaire entitled "Women & Cancer"; 2 pages 3. Questionnaire entitled "Women & Cancer"; 4 pages 4. Questionnaire entitled "Women & Cancer"; 6 pages 5. Questionnaire entitled "Oral Contraceptives & Cancer"; 2 pages	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Diet, sunbathing habits, occupational exposure, pharmaceutical drugs	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Maheux 1989a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physicians who had failed to respond to a previous questionnaire (Quebec, UK)	
Comparisons	1. Follow-up letter with hand-written postscript 2. Follow-up letter with no postscript	
Outcomes	Response within 6 months	
Topic	Health: Support for patient care issues	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Maheux 1989b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Physicians who had failed to respond to 2 mailings of a questionnaire (Quebec, UK)
Comparisons	1. Personalised mail out package 2. Non-personalised mail out package
Outcomes	Response within 6 months
Topic	Health: Support for patient care issues
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mallen 2008

Methods	Random allocation: computer generated
Data	Patients aged 50 and over from the Central Cheshire general practices who consulted their GP for non-inflammatory musculoskeletal pain between September 2006 - April 2007
Comparisons	1. Small font size - Arial 12 2. Large font size - Arial 16 3. Thin paper - 80g 4. Thick paper - 100g
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Prognosis of older people with joint pain in general practice
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Mann 2005

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Registered voters in Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania	
Comparisons	1. Advance letter 2. No advance letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Voting behaviour	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Marcus 2007

Methods	Random allocation: Using random number generation in SPSS	
Data	Owners of personal website	
Comparisons	1. High topic salience - Motives and personality of personal website owners 2. Low topic salience - Psychological aspects of Internet usage 3. Long survey - 359 items, 30-60 minutes for completion 4. Short survey - 91 items, 10-20 minutes for completion 5. Lottery to win 2 Internet book store vouchers of 25 euro each 6. No lottery 7. Personalised feedback of the results (individual profile of the results) 8. Generalised (study results) or no Feedback	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Internet competence	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Marcus 2007 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate
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Marrett 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Residents with histologically confirmed renal cell carcinoma (Ontario, US)
Comparisons	1. Lottery ticket incentive 2. No incentive
Outcomes	-
Topic	Health: History of urinary tract infection, use of analgesic and diuretic medication, demographics
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Allocation was not concealed from the person sending out the letters; Age: 25-69 years

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Marsh 1999

Methods	Random allocation: alternation
Data	Parents of children aged 3-12 months from general practices involved in a cluster randomised trial in Nottingham, UK who had responded to a previous questionnaire
Comparisons	1. Promise of a £2 voucher for a local children's store on return of the questionnaire (Postal) 2. No incentive (Postal)
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Near miss and minor injuries
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Marsh 1999 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate
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Martin 1970

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified.	
Data	Individuals listed in a telephone directory (Washington, US)	
Comparisons	1. Personalised letter (PL); Appeal to importance (AI); Commemorative Stamp (CS); Easy questionnaire (EQ) first 2. PL; AI; CS; EQ not first 3. PL; AI; Business reply frank (BRF) instead of CS 4. PL; AI; BRF; EQ not first 5. PL; No AI; CS; EQ first 6. PL; No AI; CS; EQ not first 7. PL; No AI; BRF; EQ first 8. PL; No AI; BRF; EQ not first 9. Letter not personalised (NPL); AI; CS; EQ first 10. NPL; AI; CS; EQ not first 11. NPL; AI; BRF; EQ first 12. NPL; AI; BRF; EQ not first 13. NPL; No AI; CS; EQ first 14. NPL; No AI; CS; EQ not first 15. NPL; No AI; BRF; EQ first 16. NPL; No AI; BRF; EQ not first	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Public and judicial attitudes toward various aspects of the legal machinery	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Martin 1989

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	University students	

Martin 1989 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Pre-notification (PN); Follow up (FU); Personalised (PS); Stamped reply envelope (SRE) 2. PN; No FU; PS; SRE 3. PN; FU; No PS; SRE 4. PN; No FU; No PS; SRE 5. PN; FU; PS; Business reply envelope (BRE) 6. PN; No FU; PS; BRE 7. PN; FU; No PS; BRE 8. PN; No FU; No PS; BRE 9. No PN; FU; PS; SRE 10. No PN; No FU; PS; SRE 11. No PN; FU; No PS; SRE 12. No PN; No FU; No PS; SRE 13. No PN; FU; PS; BRE 14. No PN; No FU; PS; BRE 15. No PN; FU; No PS; BRE 16. No PN; No FU; No PS; BRE	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Information on the perceived attributes of the university	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 30 years	
Risk of bias		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Martin 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Participants of a large international amateur bowling tournament	
Comparisons	1. High-interest questionnaire 2. Low-interest questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Interpersonal relationships with other customers in service environment	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Martin 1994 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Martinson 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adolescents aged 14-17 years in the Minneapolis/St Paul metropolitan area	
Comparisons	1. \$2 included with questionnaire 2. \$15 promised on completion and return of questionnaire 3. Promise of entry into 10 drawings for 10 \$200 cash prizes on completion and return of questionnaire 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards smoking, behavioural health related items	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Reminder and second questionnaire sent to non-responders 1 week and 3 weeks after initial mailing, respectively; Age: 14-17 years; Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mason 1961

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Teachers	
Comparisons	1. Long form; Name and address on form 2. Long form; Code number on form 3. Short form; Name and address on form 4. Short form; Code number on form	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Not specified	

Mason 1961 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Matteson 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of a national organisation	
Comparisons	1. Semi-personalised letter; White questionnaire 2. Semi-personalised letter; Pink questionnaire 3. Form letter; White questionnaire 4. Form letter; Pink questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Significant contribution of literature in their field	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McColl 2003a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adults with angina from 62 family practices in Northeast England	
Comparisons	1. Version 1: Condition-specific questionnaires (Seattle Angina Questionnaire) first, followed by generic questionnaires (SF-36 & EQ-5D) 2. Version 2: Generic questionnaires first, followed by condition-specific questionnaires	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

McColl 2003a (Continued)

Topic	Health: Patient-based outcome measures	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Reminder and second questionnaire sent to non-responders 3 weeks and 6 weeks after initial mailing, respectively; Mean age: 69.1 years; mainly male	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McColl 2003b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adults with asthma from 62 family practices in Northeast England	
Comparisons	1. Version 1: Condition-specific questionnaires (Newcastle Asthma Symptoms Questionnaire & Asthma Quality of Life Questionnaire) first, followed by generic questionnaires (SF-36 & EQ-5D) 2. Version 2: Generic questionnaires first, followed by condition-specific questionnaires	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Patient-based outcome measures	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Reminder and second questionnaire sent to non-responders 3 weeks and 6 weeks after initial mailing, respectively; Mean age: 48.6 years; mainly female	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McConochie 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Males aged 18-34	
Comparisons	1. 50 cents incentive 2. \$2 incentive 3. \$5 incentive	

McConochie 1985 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 1 week	
Topic	Non-health: Measurement of radio listening	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 18-34 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McCoy 2007

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Institute of Public Relations (IPR) members in Northern Ireland	
Comparisons	1. Hand written address 2. Computer-printed address 3. Brown envelope 4. White envelope	
Outcomes	Deadline for return provided	
Topic	Non-health: Practices and attitudes towards public relations evaluation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

McDaniel 1980

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Major-appliances purchasers	

McDaniel 1980 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. 25-cent incentive 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Product warranty questionnaire	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McDaniel 1981

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Major-appliances purchasers in Midwestern US	
Comparisons	1. Anonymous (no name requested and no name given) 2. Non-anonymous (name requested and given at the beginning of questionnaire)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Major appliances warranties and warranty performance	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McKee 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of a national non-profit professional organisation	

McKee 1992 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Coded 2. Not coded In coded group, only non-respondents received follow up . In non-coded group, all received follow up	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Programme of the organisation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McKenzie-McHarg 2005

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Members and fellows of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in the UK	
Comparisons	1. Hand-written signature in the cover letter 2. Scanned and printed signature in the cover letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Surgical techniques used in caesarean section operation in the UK	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McKillip 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Underclass men of a large rural Midwestern university (US)	
Comparisons	1. Utility cover letter appeal 2. Value expression appeal 3. Knowledge appeal	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Evaluation activities for an alcohol education project	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McLaren 2000a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	700 Victorian general practitioners selected from a database held by Australasian Medical Publishing Company	
Comparisons	1. Telephone pre-notification 2. Postcard pre-notification	
Outcomes	Response within 8 weeks	
Topic	Health: Management of early pregnancy, bleeding and miscarriage, referral, diagnostic methods	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

McLaren 2000b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	700 Victorian general practitioners selected from a database held by Australasian Medical Publishing Company	
Comparisons	1. Promise of entry into a prize draw for a holiday on response 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 8 weeks	
Topic	Health: Management of early pregnancy, bleeding and miscarriage, referral, diagnostic methods	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Meadows 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	600 diabetes patients aged 18 years or over selected from the patient register of a hospital outpatient diabetes centre in North England	
Comparisons	1. High frequency response alternatives; Horizontal orientation of response options 2. Medium frequency response alternatives; Horizontal orientation of response options 3. High frequency response alternatives; Vertical orientation of response options	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Diabetes health profile	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	The high frequency response alternatives are: Most days, Once a Week, Once a Month, Less Often, Never The medium frequency response alternatives are: Once a Week or More Often, Once a Month, About Every Few Months, Less Often, Never Mean age: 52.2 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Meadows 2000 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Miller 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Full-time professors at doctorate granting or comprehensive universities
Comparisons	1. Incentive (decaffeinated coffee bag) 2. No incentive 3. Cover letter appeal: 'Your input into this matter is very important in determining what faculty consider scholarship to be'. 4. Cover letter appeal: 'It is important to ascertain what faculty consider scholarship to be, in order to develop models of scholarship and further knowledge' Follow up at 3 and 6 weeks after initial mailing
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Faculty attitudes about the personal importance of scholarly activities, institutional importance of scholarly activities, attitudes about faculty workload
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mizes 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Physicians specialising in allergy randomly selected from all physicians listed under allergy or allergy/immunology in the telephone directory yellow pages of major metropolitan areas across the US
Comparisons	1. No incentive; Answer postcard 2. \$1 cheque; Answer postcard 3. \$5 cheque; Answer postcard 4. \$1 cheque; Answer cheque 5. \$5 cheque; Answer cheque
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Incidence, treatment, and the success of treatment of rhinitis melicamentosa

Mizes 1984 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation confirmed through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mond 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation in SPSS	
Data	Australian capital territory residents	
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire (8 pages long) 2. Long questionnaire (14 pages long)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Measures of general psychological distress, disability, quality of life, eating disorders, exercise behaviours, healthcare utilisation etc	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Morrison 2003

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation in SPSS	
Data	Local residents	
Comparisons	1. Study feedback information booklet 2. No information booklet	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Socio-demographics, travel behaviour, risk perception, attitudes to the local area and health	

Morrison 2003 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mortagy 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Persons listed in electoral registers (Southampton and New Forest, UK)	
Comparisons	1. Offered lottery ticket 2. Not offered lottery ticket Reminder sent to non-respondents after 4 weeks	
Outcomes		
Topic	Health: Respiratory symptoms such as breathlessness, wheezing, cough, phlegm, hyperirritability of the bronchi; family illness; smoking habits; drug treatment	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Moses 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Consultants identified from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) database	
Comparisons	1. Prize draw incentive to win a personal digital assistant 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Moses 2004 (Continued)

Topic	Health: Current practice for the laparoscopic diagnosis and treatment of women with pelvic pain due to endometriosis	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Moss 1991

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of the National Council for Educational Measurement	
Comparisons	1. Typed salutation; Metered return envelope 2. Typed salutation; Non-metered return envelope 3. Hand-written salutation; Metered return envelope 4. Hand-written salutation; Non-metered return envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Respondents belief about the frequency and credibility of criticisms of standardized test	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mullen 1987

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Non-federal office-based members of the American Academy	
Comparisons	1. Blue and white sticker incentive only 2. Withdrawal provision only 3. Incentive and withdrawal provision	

Mullen 1987 (Continued)

	4. No treatment Non-respondents followed-up 3 times	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Counselling adult patients about smoking, weight, exercise, and stress, interest in continuing education	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Mullner 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Community hospitals registered with the AHA (US)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire in booklet form (QBF); Most salient and relevant question first (SRF); Cover letter personal in tone (CLP); Results promised (RP) 2. QBF; SRF; CLP; No RP 3. QBF; SRF; Cover letter impersonal in tone (CLI); RP 4. QBF; SRF; CLI; No RP 5. QBF; Salient and relevant questions last (SRL); CLP; RP 6. QBF; SRL; CLP; No RP 7. QBF; SRL; CLI; RP 8. QBF; SRL; CLI; No RP 9. Questionnaire in 2-sided form style (QF); SRF; CLP; RP 10. QF; SRF; CLP; No RP 11. QF; SRF; CLI; RP 12. QF; SRF; CLI; No RP 13. QF; SRL; CLP; RP 14. QF; SRL; CLP; No RP 15. QF; SRL; CLI; RP 16. QF; SRL; CLI; No RP	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Corporate planning, risk management programmes, expenditures for hospital supplies, admitting privileges of physicians, programmes of special services for the elderly	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Mullner 1982 (Continued)

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Murawski 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Veterans aged 60-65	
Comparisons	1. Duke questionnaire 2. SF-36 questionnaire 3. SIP questionnaire Follow ups sent 1 and 4 weeks	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Health related quality of life (HRQoL)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 60-65 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Murphy 1991

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	International freight forwarders (US)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification postcard 2. No pre-notification postcard Follow up sent after 3 weeks	
Outcomes	Response within 62 days	
Topic	Non-health: US industrial firm check	

Murphy 1991 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 45-48 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Myers 1969

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Households listed in a street order telephone directory (Los Angeles, US)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-contact letter 2. Questionnaire only 3. Questionnaire then follow-up letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Reaction of public to various promotion efforts by the bank to establish the image of the bank	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nagata 1995

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Male owners of telephones (Gifu City, Japan)	
Comparisons	1. 1-page; Cigarette smoking and drinking 2. 2 pages; Cigarette smoking and drinking; Medical history 3. 2 pages; Cigarette smoking and drinking; Family history 4. 2 pages; Cigarette smoking and drinking; Family history; Consanguineous marriage 5. 3 pages; Cigarette smoking and drinking; Medical history; Family history; Consanguineous marriage 6. 2 pages; Cigarette smoking and drinking; Medical history; Family history; Consanguineous marriage	

Nagata 1995 (Continued)

	Follow up in group 1 only	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Medical history, family history, smoking, drinking	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Mostly 46-65 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nakai 1997

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	People aged 40-64	
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire (4 pages) 2. Long questionnaire (8 pages)	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Health status, health related practice, smoking status	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 40-64 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Napoles-Springer 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	African American or White, who were at least 50 years old, and had once visited the primary care practices of an academic health centre during the previous year	

Napoles-Springer 2004 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Advance notice letter 2. No advance letter	
Outcomes	Response period within 2 weeks	
Topic	Health: Patient satisfaction in adult ambulatory care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Nederhof 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	All members of the general population of a medium-sized Dutch town	
Comparisons	1. Telephone pre-notification 2. Mail pre-notification	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nederhof 1983a

Methods	Random allocation: Using alternation	
Data	Group of members of the general public in Leyden, Netherlands	
Comparisons	1. Computer-printed address label 2. Hand-written address label 3. Ball-point pen worth \$ 0.35 4. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards suicide	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nederhof 1983b

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Group of members of the general public in Leyden, Netherlands	
Comparisons	1. Computer-printed address label 2. Hand-written address label	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes about females social roles and vegetarianism	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nederhof 1988

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Biotechnologists living in the Netherlands
Comparisons	1. Graphic illustration on cover of questionnaire largely in white 2. Graphic illustration on cover of questionnaire largely in black
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Development in Biotechnology in the Netherlands
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Neider 1981a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	A sample of training and development directors who were members of the American Association for Training and Development
Comparisons	1. Hand addressed outgoing envelope 2. Typed outgoing envelope 3. Computer generated label on outgoing envelope
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified.
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Neider 1981b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A sample of Class I and II common carriers	
Comparisons	1. Hand addressed outgoing envelope 2. Typed outgoing envelope 3. Computer generated label on outgoing envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nevin 1975a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residents of university halls (US)	
Comparisons	1. Given deadline of 5 days 2. Given deadline of 7 days 3. Given deadline of 9 days 4. No deadline given	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes about residence halls	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nevin 1975b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Non-responders to earlier survey of university hall residents
Comparisons	1. Follow-up letter with casual approach 2. Follow-up letter with veiled threat
Outcomes	Response within 18 days
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes about residence halls
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Newby 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation.
Data	Businesses listed in Perth, Western Australia
Comparisons	1. Monetary incentive worth A\$20 2. Pre-notification by telephone 3. Control
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes and expectations of the self-employed
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Newland 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed in electoral register (Southampton, UK)	
Comparisons	1. First class stamp on outgoing envelope; First class stamp on return envelope; White envelopes 2. Second class stamp on outgoing envelope; Second class envelope on return; White envelope 3. Second class frank on outgoing envelope; Second class business reply return envelope; White envelopes. 4. First class stamp on outgoing envelope; First class stamp on return envelope; Brown envelopes 5. Second class stamp on outgoing envelope; Second class envelope on return; Brown envelope 6. Second class frank on outgoing envelope; Second class business reply return envelope; Brown envelopes Follow up at 2 and 16 weeks including another copy of the questionnaire	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Details of headache and accompanying symptoms, general health, demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nichols 1966

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	College students who had returned a similar questionnaire 1 year previously	
Comparisons	1. Follow-up postcard after 3 days; Further follow-up mailings 2. Not sent postcard after 3 days; Further follow-up mailings	
Outcomes	Response within 120 days	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Nichols 1988

Methods	Random allocation: alternation.
Data	Individuals listed on the electoral roll (Southampton, UK)
Comparisons	1. Information booklet sent 5 weeks before questionnaire 2. No information booklet sent
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Nutritional health education leaflet
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Ogborne 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Health and social service professionals who had not responded to an earlier mailing
Comparisons	1. Second questionnaires sent 2. Telephoned by a research assistant
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Evaluation of innovative addiction assessment/referral programme
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Olivarius 1995

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	GPs and specialists or consultants (Nordic countries)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire received on a Friday (GPs) 2. Questionnaire received on a Monday (GPs) 3. Questionnaire received on a Friday (Specialists) 4. Questionnaire received on a Monday (Specialists) Follow ups sent after 14 and 28 days	
Outcomes	Response within 60 days	
Topic	Health: Importance of GPs, treatment of general diseases	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Osborne 1996

Abstract 1990

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	General practitioners	
Comparisons	1. Received pre-contact telephone call from non-medical research assistant 2. No pre-contact	
Outcomes	Response within 60 days	
Topic	Health: Views about pathological test ordering	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Paolillo 1984

Methods	Random allocation: systematic division	
Data	A sample of professionals from the Midwestern US	
Comparisons	1. Control group 2. \$1 enclosed with questionnaire 3. \$2 promised on return of questionnaire 4. Entry into a lottery for a cash prize promised on return of questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response within 6 weeks	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Parasuraman 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Commercial marketing research firms (US)	
Comparisons	1. Brief cover letter 2. Detailed cover letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Aspects of marketing research	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Parkes 2000a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adults aged 20-74 years who are cases or controls in a Canadian case-control study of cancer	
Comparisons	1. Enclosure of brochure with questionnaire which expands on the information provided in the covering letter about the survey 2. No brochure	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Tobacco exposure, diet, physical activity, use of medications, reproductive history	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	A reminder postcard, a reminder letter and second copy of the questionnaire and a follow-up phone call were made 1-2,4 and 6 weeks after the initial mailing, respectively, to non-responders Age: 20-74 year	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Parkes 2000b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adults aged 20-74 years who are controls in a Canadian case-control study of cancer	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$2 sent with questionnaire 3. \$5 sent with questionnaire	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Tobacco exposure, diet, physical activity, use of medications, reproductive history	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	A reminder postcard, a reminder letter and second copy of the questionnaire and a follow-up phone call were made 1-2,4 and 6 weeks after the initial mailing, respectively, to non-responders Age: 20-74 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Parkes 2000b (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Parsons 1972a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Alumni from a Masters in Business Administration Program at a private university
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification 2. No pre-notification
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Correlation between political opinions and religious belief
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Allocation concealment ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Parsons 1972b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Leaders of 2 religious sects (US)
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification 2. No pre-notification
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Correlation between political opinions and religious belief
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Allocation concealment ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Parsons 1972b (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate
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Paul 2005

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Pharmacists in NSW, Australia who had sold Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or Bupropion in the last month
Comparisons	1. Gift voucher worth A\$20 2. No voucher
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Smoking cessation
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Pearson 2003

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel
Data	Alumni at Stanford University
Comparisons	1. Salutation - Generic (Dear Stanford Alumni) 2. Salutation - Familiar personalisation (Dear James) 3. Salutation - Familiar personalisation without the dear (James) 4. Salutation - Formal personalised (Dear Mr. Bond)
Outcomes	Response within 27 days
Topic	Non-health: Stanford University's logos, image, and branding
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Age: Mostly 30-49 years; Mainly males

Risk of bias

Pearson 2003 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Peck 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Men and women who had been high school juniors in spring 1973 (US)	
Comparisons	1. Prepaid \$3 incentive 2. Promised \$3 incentive 3. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 5 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Career plans, labour market, post high school educational experience	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Perneger 1993

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Young adults enrolled in various insurance plans (US)	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. Reminder card 3. Money offer 4. Both incentives Follow up with the incentive found to be best after 14 days	
Outcomes	Response within 80 days	
Topic	Health: Health status, risk taking behaviours, utilisation of health services, satisfaction with health care, socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Perneger 1993 (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Age: Mostly 26-30 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Perry 1974

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Respondents to a previous questionnaire	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent in pre-paid franked envelope 2. Questionnaire sent in hand-stamped envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Peters 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	People aged 35 and over registered with a general practice (Bristol, UK)	
Comparisons	1. Telephone number requested 2. Telephone number not requested	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Information about chronic conditions, socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Peterson 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Individuals listed in a telephone directory
Comparisons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University source (U); Outgoing envelope (OE) metered; Return envelope (RE) stamped; Follow-up postcard (FUP); Address (A) typed 2. U; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; FUP; A-typed 3. Business source (B); OE-metered; RE-stamped; FUP; A-typed 4. B; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; FUP; A-typed 5. U; OE-metered; RE-stamped; FUP; A-label 6. U; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; FUP; A-label 7. B; OE-metered; RE-stamped; FUP; A-typed 8. B; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; FUP; A-label 9. U; OE-metered; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-typed 10. U; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-typed 11. B; OE-metered; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-typed 12. B; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-typed 13. U; OE-metered; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-label 14. U; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-label 15. B; OE-metered; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-label 16. B; OE-stamped; RE-stamped; No FUP; A-label 17. U; OE-metered; RE-Business reply (reply); FUP; typed 18. U; OE-stamped; RE-reply; FUP; A-typed 19. B; OE-metered; RE-reply; FUP; A-typed 20. B; OE-stamped; RE-reply; FUP; A-typed 21. U; OE-metered; RE-reply; FUP; A-label 22. U; OE-stamped; RE-reply; FUP; A-label 23. B; OE-metered; RE-reply; FUP; A-label 24. B; OE-stamped; RE-reply; FUP; A-label 25. U; OE-metered; RE-reply; No FUP; typed 26. U; OE-stamped; RE-reply; No FUP; A-typed 27. B; OE-metered; RE-reply; No FUP; A-typed 28. B; OE-stamped; RE-reply; No FUP; A-typed 29. U; OE-metered; RE-reply; No FUP; A-label 30. U; OE-stamped; RE-reply; No FUP; A-label 31. B; OE-metered; RE-reply; No FUP; A-label 32. B; OE-stamped; RE-reply; No FUP; A-label

Peterson 1975 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Non-health: Banking and financial attitudes	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Phillips 1951

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Graduates of Fisk University in the classes of 1924 and 1939	
Comparisons	1. Follow up by first class mail 2. Follow up by special delivery mail	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Pirotta 1999

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	General practitioners	
Comparisons	1. Sent primer postcard 5 days before questionnaire 2. Not sent primer postcard before questionnaire	

Pirotta 1999 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 60 days	
Topic	Health: Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: additional unpublished data provided was slightly different to published report, author data included	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Poe 1988

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	Relatives of people who had died and who's death certificates had been filed in September and October 1984	
Comparisons	1. 'Don't know' boxes included 2. 'Don't know' boxes not included	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Health care in the last year of life, health practices, socio-economics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Porter 2003a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SAS	
Data	Non-applicant high school students	
Comparisons	1. Control 2. \$ 50 gift voucher for Amazon.com	

Porter 2003a (Continued)

	3. \$ 100 gift voucher for Amazon.com 4. \$ 150 gift voucher for Amazon.com 5. \$ 200 gift voucher for Amazon.com.	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Application to college	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Porter 2003b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SAS	
Data	Non-applicant high school students	
Comparisons	1. Salutations impersonal (e.g. Dear Student) 2. Salutations personal (e.g. Dear Jane) 3. Title of signatory, high (Director) 4. Title of signatory, low (Administrative assistant) 5. Sponsorship, low-profile office (Office of Institutional Research) 6. Sponsorship, high-profile office (Office of Admission) 7. Source of e-mail address, office (e.g. surveyresearch@institution.edu) 8. Source of e-mail address, person (e.g. jsmith@institution.edu)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Perceptions of the college and the reasons for not applying	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Porter 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SAS	
Data	High school seniors who did not apply to the college	
Comparisons	1. Subject-line - Blank 2. Subject-line - Survey 3. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University 4. Subject-line - Request for Assistance 5. Subject-line - Survey, Request for Assistance 6. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University, Request for Assistance 7. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University, Survey 8. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University, Request for Assistance, Survey	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health : Perceptions of the school	
Mode of Administration	Electronic : Online survey	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Porter 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SAS	
Data	Undergraduates currently enrolled at the institution	
Comparisons	1. Subject-line - Blank 2. Subject-line - Survey 3. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University 4. Subject-line - Request for Assistance 5. Subject-line - Survey, Request for Assistance 6. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University, Request for Assistance 7. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University, Survey 8. Subject-line - Liberal Arts University, Request for Assistance, Survey	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Abilities on various capabilities and types of knowledge	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	

Porter 2005b (Continued)

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Porter S 2003b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SAS	
Data	Non-applicant high school students	
Comparisons	1. Selective statement in the e-mail invitation 2. No selective statement in the e-mail invitation 3. Mention of General deadline in at least 1 e-mail 4. Mention of specific deadline in e-mail 3 5. Mention of specific deadline in e-mails 2 and 3 6. Mention of specific deadline in e-mails 1,2, and 3 7. No general deadline 8. No specific deadline	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Perceptions of the college and the reasons for not applying	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Pourjalali 1994

Methods	Random allocation: random number table	
Data	Students who had participated in an investment game	
Comparisons	1. Investigator perceived to be African-American (AA); Male Investigator (MI); Informal letter (IL); Easier questions first (E1) 2. AA; MI; IL Harder questions first (H1)	

	3. AA; Female investigator (FI); IL; E1 4. AA; FI; IL; H1 5. AA; MI; Formal letter (FL); E1 6. AA; MI; FL; H1 7. AA; FI; FL; E1 8. AA; FI; FL; H1 9. Investigator perceived to beCaucasian (Ca); MI; IL; E1 10. Ca; MI; IL; H1 11. Ca; FI; IL; E1 12. Ca; FI; IL; H1 13. Ca; MI; FL; E1 14. Ca; MI; FL; H1 15. Ca; FI; FL; E1 16. Ca; FI; FL; H1 17. Investigator perceived to be Hispanic (Hi); MI; IL; E1 18. Hi; MI; IL; H1 19. Hi; FI; IL; E1 20. Hi; FI; IL; H1 21. Hi; MI; FL; E1 22. Hi; MI; FL; H1 23. Hi; FI; FL; E1 24. Hi; FI; FL; H1 25. Investigator perceived to be 'Foreign/Alien' (Fo); MI; IL; E1 26. Fo; MI; IL; H1 27. Fo; FI; IL; E1 28. Fo; FI; IL; H1 29. Fo; MI; FL; E1 30. Fo; MI; FL; H1 31. Fo; FI; FL; E1 32. Fo; FI; FL; H1	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: AT&T investment game	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Equal male and females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Powers 1982

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	High school juniors	
Comparisons	1. Feedback offered; Long questionnaire 2. Feedback offered; Short questionnaire 3. No feedback offered; Long questionnaire 4. No feedback, Short questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Students reaction to the test administration and/or to the preparatory materials of SAT	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Pressley 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Marketing research directors	
Comparisons	1. Dime incentive included 2. No incentive 3. Cartoons 4. No cartoons 5. Yellow questionnaire 6. Blue questionnaire 7. Green questionnaire 8. White questionnaire Factorial design. Follow up sent to non-respondents after 3 weeks	
Outcomes	Response within 6 weeks.	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Pressley 1977 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Pressley 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Executives employed by organisations located throughout the US	
Comparisons	1. Postscript; Deadline 2. No postscript; Deadline 3. Postscript; No deadline 4. No postscript; No deadline	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Pressley 1985

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Executives at VP-level in firms employing more than 500 (US)	
Comparisons	1. Mailed on Friday 2. Mailed on Monday 3. Coding hand-written in black ink 4. Coding in invisible ink 5. Coding was typed room number 6. Telephone pre-notification without incentive 7. Postcard pre-notification with \$0.10 incentive 8. Sent in window envelope 9. Sent in regular envelope	

Pressley 1985 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 2 weeks	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Price 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A random sample of African-American women from a Midwestern university minority alumni membership list	
Comparisons	1. Race specific stamp on return envelope 2. General stamp on return envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Cervical cancer	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Price 2003

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Public health educators and University professors in Health Education who did not respond to the second mailing	

Price 2003 (Continued)

Comparisons	1. Signed postcard 2. Unsigned postcard	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Health education skills	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Pucel 1971

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Graduates (Minnesota, US)	
Comparisons	1. Control 2. Pencil incentive 3. Coffee incentive 4. Green questionnaire 5. Pre-notification letter 6. Pencil; Green questionnaire 7. Pencil; Pre-notification letter 8. Pencil; Green questionnaire; Pre-notification letter 9. Coffee incentive; Green questionnaire 10. Coffee incentive; Pre-notification letter 11. Coffee incentive; Green questionnaire; Pre-notification letter	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Criteria in counselling applicants to post high school vocational technical schools	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Pucel 1971 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Puffer 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generation in SPSS
Data	Women who returned the risk factor questionnaire for Osteoporotic fracture
Comparisons	1. Single booklet - 3 sections stapled together 2. Multiple booklet 3. Single-sided 4. Double-sided
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Patient-based outcome measures concerned with Quality of Life (SF36, EQ5D)
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Renfroe 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Participants of the AVID trial, USA
Comparisons	1. Mailed out by overnight express (OE); Certificate of appreciation included (CA); Mailed early (E); Signature of Principal Investigator on cover letter (PI) 2. OE; CA; E; Signature of Study Coordinator on cover letter (SC) 3. OE; CA; Mailed late (L); PI 4. OE; CA; L; SC 5. OE; No CA; E; PI 6. OE; No CA; E; SC 7. OE; No CA; L; PI 8. OE; No CA; L; SC 9. Mailed out by regular mail (RM); CA; E; PI 10. RM; CA; E; SC 11. RM; CA; L; PI 12. RM; CA; L; SC 13. RM; No CA; E; PI

Renfroe 2002 (Continued)

	14. RM; No CA; E; SC 15. RM; No CA; L; PI 16. RM; No CA; L; SC	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Patient satisfaction	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 63; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Riesenberg 2006

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Designated Institutional Official (DIO)	
Comparisons	1. Priority stamps worth \$3.85 2. First-class stamps worth \$0.60	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Employment - Demographics, identification of roles and responsibilities, competencies, training and experience required by the DIO	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rikard-Bell 2000

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Dentists practising within the central Sydney area, Australia in 1997
Comparisons	1. Advance telephone prompt 2. Advance letter prompt
Outcomes	Response within 65 days
Topic	Health: Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Rimm 1990

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Male health professionals who had not responded to a previous questionnaire
Comparisons	1. Certified mail 2. United parcel service 3. Window envelope with personal return address 4. Typed address 5. Hand-written address 6. Window envelope with computer printed address Factorial design
Outcomes	-
Topic	Health: Medical history, current diet and lifestyle habits
Mode of Administration	Postal.
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Age: 40-75; Mainly males

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Rimm 1990 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate
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Roberts 1978

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	General practitioners who were members of the American Dental Association
Comparisons	1. Personalised; Social appeal; Deadline 2. Personalised; Social appeal; No deadline 3. Personalised; No social appeal; Deadline 4. Personalised; No social appeal; No deadline 5. Not personalised; Social appeal; Deadline 6. Not personalised; Social appeal; No deadline 7. Not personalised; No social appeal; Deadline 8. Not personalised; No social appeal; No deadline
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Informed that allocation concealment was adequate

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Roberts 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Adults listed on a family health services authority register who had not responded to a previous questionnaire
Comparisons	1. First reminder was another copy of questionnaire 2. First reminder was a postcard
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health and lifestyle

Roberts 1993 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 16-70 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roberts 1994

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Nurses (Auckland, New Zealand)	
Comparisons	1. Brown re-usable envelope out; Brown re-usable envelope return 2. Brown re-usable envelope out; White non-reusable envelope return 3. White non-reusable envelope out; Brown re-usable envelope return 4. White non-reusable envelope out; White non-reusable envelope return Reminders sent using the same envelope combination as initially allocated	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Prevalence of back pain	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 37.5 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roberts 2000

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	1000 English women aged 40 to 65 years	
Comparisons	1. Entry into lottery for prize draw of £50 on response 2. Direct payment of £5 on response 3. Entry into lottery and direct payment of £5 on response 4. No incentive	

Roberts 2000 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 3 months	
Topic	Health: Menopause services	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roberts 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	General practices in the North and West Birmingham area	
Comparisons	1. Lottery to win high street shopping voucher worth £100 2. Control	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Prevalence of IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) using SF36, Rome II criteria	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 48 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Robertson 1978

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A systematic sample of Denver area residents listed in the Metropolitan area phone directory	
Comparisons	1. Control; No incentive 2. Promise of \$1 cash on return of questionnaire 3. Promise of \$1 donation to charity on return of questionnaire	

Robertson 1978 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Robertson 2005

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Australian general practitioners and medical specialists	
Comparisons	1. \$ AU 2 scratch lottery ticket 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Heath: Exploring new drug use by GPs and Medical specialists	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Rolnick 1989

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Women with sexually transmitted diseases	
Comparisons	1. Detailed questionnaire 2. Modified questionnaire	

Rolnick 1989 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 2 months	
Topic	Health: Gynaecological issues	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 18-28 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Romney 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Community educators	
Comparisons	1. Open-ended format 2. Closed-ended format	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Community educational needs assessment instrument	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ronckers 2004

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Dutch patients treated for ENT condition between 1945 and 1981	
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire (8 pages) 2. Long questionnaire (12 pages) 3. Standard consent form 4. Multi-option consent form (choices with regard to participation in 3 phases of the overall study)	

Ronckers 2004 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Female reproductive history, occupational exposures, and diet	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roscoe 1975

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Random sample of telephone customers	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire; Postcard reminder follow up 2. Long questionnaire; Telephone reminder follow up 3. Short questionnaire; Postcard reminder follow up 4. Short questionnaire; Telephone reminder follow up	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Telephone behaviours, housing, mobility, demographics, socioeconomic characteristics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rose 2007a

Methods	Random allocation: using random numbers chart	
Data	Employees of a large international retailer in the US	
Comparisons	1. \$1 bill 2. No incentive	

Rose 2007a (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period within 10 days	
Topic	Non-health: Related to marketing skills, management, and leadership qualities	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Surveys with incentives enclosed were identified by a one-inch-long, one-fourth-inch-wide yellow high-lighter mark within a half inch of both edges of the lower left corner of the back side of the survey. Also one-fourth inch of the non highlighted corner at the bottom of the survey was cut off	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rose 2007b

Methods	Random allocation: using random numbers chart	
Data	Employees of a large health care organisation in the US	
Comparisons	1. Low novelty - Plain bill 2. High Novelty - Bill with small star sticker or Sacagawea gold dollar coin 3. A penny bill 4. A quarter bill 5. A dollar bill 6. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 21 days	
Topic	Non-health: Training needs	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Surveys with incentives enclosed bears a one-inch-long, one-fourth-inch-wide highlighted mark within a half inch of both edges of the lower left corner of the back side of the survey. Packets with pennies had orange marks, packets with quarters had yellow marks, packets with paper dollars had blue marks, and packets with sacagawea dollars had green highlighter marks. In addition, one-fourth inch of the non highlighted corner at the bottom of the survey was cut off	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rosoff 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: random block procedure
Data	Childhood cancer survivors
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$10 bill 2. Conditional \$10 bill
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health-related behaviours among childhood cancer survivors and their parents
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rosoff 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: random block procedure
Data	Childhood cancer survivors
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$10 bill 2. Conditional \$10 bill
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health-related behaviours among childhood cancer survivors and their parents
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rosoff 2005c

Methods	Random allocation: random block procedure
Data	Parents of childhood cancer survivors
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$10 bill 2. Conditional \$10 bill
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health-related behaviours among childhood cancer survivors and their parents
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Students studying Wealth Accumulation Planning
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing
Outcomes	-
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Financial Services: Environment and Professions	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990c

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Estate and Gift Tax Planning	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990d

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Wealth Accumulation Planning	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990e

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Economics	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990f

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Pensions and Other Retirement Plans	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990g

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Advanced Estate Planning	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990h

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Financial Statement Analysis	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990i

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Group Benefits and Social Insurance	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990j

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Planning for Business Owners and Professionals	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes		
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990k

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Financial Statement Analysis	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990l

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Financial and Estate Planning	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990m

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Financial and Estate planning	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Roszkowski 1990n

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students studying Group Benefits and Social Insurance	
Comparisons	1. Long questionnaire 2. Short questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents of first mailing	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Evaluation of the financial courses	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rucker 1979a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students	
Comparisons	1. Standard questionnaire 2. Matrix questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents after 10 days	
Outcomes	Response within 2 months	
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes towards purchasing clothes	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rucker 1979b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Students	
Comparisons	1. Standard questionnaire 2. Matrix questionnaire Follow up sent to non-respondents after 10 days	
Outcomes	Response within 1 month	
Topic	Non-health: Clothing attitudes	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Rucker 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Graduates	
Comparisons	1. Textiles student sponsor; No photo of person on cover letter 2. Textiles student sponsor; Casually dressed person on cover letter 3. Textiles student sponsor; Formal dressed person on cover letter 4. Textiles professor sponsor; No photo of person on cover letter 5. Textiles professor sponsor; Casually dressed person on cover letter 6. Textiles professor sponsor; Formal dressed person on cover letter 7. Animal science student sponsor; No photo of person on cover letter 8. Animal science student sponsor; Casually dressed person on cover letter 9. Animal science student sponsor; Formal dressed person on cover letter 10. Animal science professor sponsor; No photo of person on cover letter 11. Animal science professor sponsor; Casually dressed person on cover letter 12. Animal science professor sponsor; Formal dressed person on cover letter Postcard reminder and second questionnaire sent to non -respondents at approximately bi-monthly intervals	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Furniture opinion	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Rucker 1984 (Continued)

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Russell 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Chiropractors registered with the College of Chiropractors of Alberta	
Comparisons	1. Unconditional \$5 bill 2. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Immunisation beliefs and behaviours of Chiropractors	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ryu 2006

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	Detroit Area Study (DAS) 2001	
Comparisons	1. Cash (\$5 bill) 2. In-kind (set of passes to regional parks, or metro parks)	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Quality of life in the Metropolitan Detroit Area	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	

Ryu 2006 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Saal 2005

Methods	Random allocation: using alternation	
Data	In-patients admitted for elective surgery at the St. Gallen Cantonal Hospital	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent 1 week after discharge 2. Questionnaire sent 5 weeks after discharge 3. Questionnaire sent 9 weeks after discharge	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Patients assessment of anaesthesia care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Survey was conducted by an independent organisation - The picker Institute	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Salim Silva 2002

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	2 female Australian samples. Sample A - current office workers at a university. Sample B - Patients seen by a consultant in rehab medicine	
Comparisons	1. Telephone reminder 2. No telephone reminder	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Musculoskeletal symptoms, health service utilisation, tobacco and alcohol consumption, social support, occupational history and job satisfaction, general health, socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Salim Silva 2002 (Continued)

Notes	Age: Mostly above 45 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Sallis 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physicians who had not responded to a previous questionnaire (Monterey County)	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. Pencil incentive printed with an attractive design	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Salvesen 1992

Methods	Random allocation: using a table of random numbers	
Data	Mothers who had not responded to a previous questionnaire	
Comparisons	1. Newspaper article with description of the study 2. No article sent with the questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Health: Child's health - hearing, vision	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Salvesen 1992 (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Allocation was not concealed; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Sang-Wook 2005

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SAS	
Data	Korean-Vietnam Veterans	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaires sent via Recorded Delivery 2. Questionnaires sent via Standard Delivery 3. Stamped Return Envelope 4. Franked Return Envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Veterans socio-economic and health status, medical check-up	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Sauerland 2002

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	All members of the association of German surgeons	
Comparisons	1. Hernia and Pain Questionnaires sent together in 1 letter 2. Hernia Questionnaire sent first, pain questionnaire sent 4 weeks later 3. Pain Questionnaire sent first, hernia questionnaire sent 4 weeks later	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Perioperative pain management, Surgical technique in incisional hernia repair	

Sauerland 2002 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Schmidt 2005

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in SPSS	
Data	Product Development and Management Association (PDMA) members	
Comparisons	1. Certified mail on outward mailing 2. First-class mail on outward mailing	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Development of new products by various organisations	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Schweitzer 1995

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	University staff employed for at least 6 years (Pennsylvania, US)	
Comparisons	1. Non-form fillers; Paid in advance 2. Non-form fillers; Paid on completion 3. Form-fillers; Paid in advance 4. Non-form fillers; Paid on completion Reminder sent to non-respondents after 4 weeks	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours regarding the selection of employee health benefits	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 45-48 years	

Schweitzer 1995 (Continued)

<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Scott 1957

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Women aged 60 years and over from poll tax exemption lists for Travis County, Texas, USA, 1954	
Comparisons	1. Preliminary letter received on Monday, questionnaire received on Tuesday 2. Preliminary letter received on Monday, questionnaire received on Friday 3. No preliminary letter, questionnaire received on Wednesday 4. No preliminary letter, questionnaire received on Saturday	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Occupational history, present income/pension payment	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: above 60 years; Mainly females	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

See Tai 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Patients who had not responded to a questionnaire (London, UK)	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire reminder 2. Telephone reminder	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: to evaluate the use of structural computerised prompts in their management using Asthma Symptoms Questionnaire & Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (for patients with Asthma), and Well-being Questionnaire and Diabetes Treatment Questionnaire (for patients with Diabetics)	

See Tai 1997 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: Telephone group - 47.5 years; Recorded delivery group - 40 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Shackleton 1980

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Partially sighted school leavers aged between 17 and 20 years who had left schools for the visually handicapped during the previous academic year	
Comparisons	1. £1 offered; previous examination 2. No incentive; previous examination 3. £1 offered; no examination 4. No incentive; no examination	
Outcomes	Response within 42 days	
Topic	Non-health: Occupational experience during 1st year after leaving the school	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Age: 17-20 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Shah 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Patients aged 65 to 74 years in an inner London practice who had consulted within the last 2 years	
Comparisons	1. Inclusion of questions on income; inclusion of consent form 2. Inclusion of questions on income; no consent form 3. No questions on income; inclusion of consent form 4. No questions on income; no consent form	

Shah 2001 (Continued)

Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Physical and mental health, social circumstances, social support, living arrangements, income	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 65-74 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Shahar 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals who had declined to participate in a previous study	
Comparisons	1. Additional letter with first mailing requesting an explanation for not participating 2. No letter	
Outcomes	Response within 14 weeks	
Topic	Health: General health, physical activity, smoking habits, list of chronic disease, demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Sharp 2006

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Participants from the TOMBOLA (Trial Of Management of Borderline and Other Low-grade Abnormal smears) trial	
Comparisons	1. Pen 2. No pen 3. First class dispatch	

Sharp 2006 (Continued)

	4. Second class dispatch 5. Freepost (business reply) envelope 6. Postage stamp envelope	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Psychosocial impact of having a low-grade abnormal cervical smear and its subsequent management	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Shaw 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	HealthSystem Minnesota enrollees aged 20-80 years	
Comparisons	1. \$5 included in survey package 2. \$2 included in survey package	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Digestive Health Status instrument (DHS I), SF-36, HADS, Comorbidity checklist, health care utilisation	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 20-80 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Sheikh 1982

Methods	Random allocation; method not specified	
Data	400 people who had completed an assessment course at an employment rehabilitation centre in London 1973-1974	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire including sensitive question on earnings 2. Same questionnaire as (1) without the sensitive question on earnings	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Employment	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 39 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Shin 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Faculty members in universities and 4 year colleges in the United States	
Comparisons	1. Personalised (P); anonymous (A); professional appeal (Prof); university sponsored (U) questionnaire 2. P; A; Prof; Private research institute sponsored (PR) 3. P; A; personal appeal (Pers); U 4. P; A; Pers; PR 5. P; Nonanonymous (NA); Prof; U 6. P; NA; Prof; PR 7. P; NA; Pers; U 8. P; NA; Pers; PR 9. Not Personalised (Not P); A; Prof; U 10. Not P; A; Prof; PR 11. Not P; A; Pers; U 12. Not P; A; Pers; PR 13. Not P; NA; Prof; U 14. Not P; NA; Prof; PR 15. Not P; NA; Pers; U 16. Not P; NA; Pers; PR	
Outcomes	Response within 7 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Student evaluation of faculty instruction	

Shin 1992 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Shiono 1991

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physicians (US)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification letter; Stamp on return envelope 2. Pre-notification letter; Return envelope franked 3. No pre-notification letter; Stamp on return envelope 4. No pre-notification letter; Return envelope franked	
Outcomes		
Topic	Health: Pregnancy among resident physicians	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Simon 1967a

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Readers of an magazine published by a national industrial company	
Comparisons	1. Personal letter 2. Form letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards a hospital insurance plan	

Simon 1967a (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: unable to provide further details on randomisation	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Simon 1967b

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Readers of an magazine published by a national industrial company	
Comparisons	1. Personal letter 2. Form letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards a hospital insurance plan	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: unable to provide further details on randomisation	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Simon 1967c

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Subscribers to a hospital insurance plan	
Comparisons	1. Personal letter 2. Form letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Attitudes towards a hospital insurance plan	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Simon 1967c (Continued)

Notes	Author contacted: unable to provide further details on randomisation	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Skinner 1984

Journal 1981

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Marketing professors, Canada	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. \$1 pre-paid incentive 3. \$1 promised incentive; Respondent identified 4. \$1 promised incentive; Respondent not identified 5. \$1 promised to charity	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Needs of Canadian instructors regarding an introductory marketing text	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Sletto 1940

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Former university students	
Comparisons	1. 10-page questionnaire; Altruistic appeal in cover letter 2. 10-page questionnaire; Cover letter requesting help 3. 10-page questionnaire; Cover letter challenging participants to respond 4. 25-page questionnaire; Altruistic appeal in cover letter 5. 25-page questionnaire; Cover letter requesting help 6. 25-page questionnaire; Cover letter challenging participants to respond 7. 35-page questionnaire (10 and 25-page questionnaires); Altruistic appeal in cover letter	

Sletto 1940 (Continued)

	8. 35-page questionnaire (10 and 25-page questionnaires); Cover letter requesting help 9. 35-page questionnaire (10 and 25-page questionnaires); Cover letter challenging participants to respond	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Vocational activities, needs, interest, socio-civic activities	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Sloan 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Doctors of patients with cancer	
Comparisons	1. University letterhead (UL); MD signatory (MD); Hand-written note (HN) 2. Cancer agency letterhead (CL); MD; HN 3. UL; PhD signatory (PhD), HN 4. CL; PhD; HN 5. UL; MD; No HN 6. CL; MD; No HN 7. UL; PhD, No HN 8. CL; PhD, No HN NB: this was a letter requesting doctors to give consent for patients to be contacted and sent questionnaires	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Smith 1985

Methods	Random allocation: sequential sampling
Data	Patients aged 40-59 years registered with an urban general practice, UK
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent by General Practitioner 2. Questionnaire sent by a Doctor from the research unit
Outcomes	Response within 9 weeks
Topic	Health: Aggression scale, Social desirability scale, Fear survey schedule II, Situations evoking social anxiety scale, Social evaluative anxiety scale
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Spry 1989a

Methods	Random allocation: using a table of random numbers
Data	Residences listed in the Haines Directory (San Diego, US)
Comparisons	1. Telephone pre-notification; Lottery entry offer 2. Telephone pre-notification; No lottery offer 3. Postcard pre-notification; Lottery entry offer 4. Postcard pre-notification; No lottery offer 5. No pre-notification; Lottery entry offer 6. No pre-notification; No lottery offer
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health and physical activity habits
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Randomisation not concealed; Mainly males

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Spry 1989a (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate
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Spry 1989b

Methods	Random allocation: using a table of random numbers
Data	Residences listed in the Haines Directory (San Diego, US)
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire; Lottery 2. Short questionnaire; No lottery 3. Long questionnaire; Lottery 4. Long questionnaire; No lottery
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health and physical activity habits
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Randomisation not concealed; Mainly males

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Spry 1989c

Methods	Random allocation: using a table of random numbers
Data	Residences listed in the Haines Directory who had not responded to a questionnaire (San Diego, US)
Comparisons	1. Promise of \$5 when respond 2. Promise of \$1 when respond 3. \$1 bill enclosed 4. No incentive
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health and physical activity habits
Mode of Administration	Postal

Spry 1989c (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author. Randomisation not concealed; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Stafford 1966

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	University students (Houston, US)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification letter sent 2. Pre-notification telephone call made 3. No pre-notification contact	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Non-health: Collegiate clothing market	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Stapulonis 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Members form the Welfare-to-Work evaluation site at Chicago	
Comparisons	1. Conditional \$20 check 2. Conditional point-of-sale cards worth \$20	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Employment	

Stapulonis 2004 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Electronic: Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI)	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Stem 1984a

Methods	Random allocation: using random number table	
Data	Students	
Comparisons	1. Randomised response model 2. Direct questions	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non -health: Cheating behaviours during exams	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Stem 1984b

Methods	Random allocation: using random number table	
Data	Automobile sales license holders	
Comparisons	1. Randomised response model 2. Direct questions	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Automobile selling practices	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Stevens 1975

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Graduates from a southern university (US)	
Comparisons	1. Pre-coded questionnaire 2. Questionnaire not pre-coded	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Job hunting experience	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Streiff 2001

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Randomly selected members of the American Society of Hematology	
Comparisons	1. Business reply envelope 2. Stamped return envelope	
Outcomes	Response within 3 months	
Topic	Health: Diagnosis and treatment of polycythaemia Vera	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Subar 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	900 control participants from 3 centres in the prostate, lung, colorectal and ovarian cancer screening trial
Comparisons	1. Diet history questionnaire - 36 pages 2. Food frequency questionnaire - 16 pages
Outcomes	-
Topic	Health: Food frequency questionnaire, Diet history questionnaire
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Age: 55-74 years

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Sutton 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Business customers who had taken advantage of an earlier rebate programme
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification postcard; Prior telephone call 2. Pre-notification postcard; No prior telephone call 3. No pre-notification postcard; No prior telephone call 4. No pre-notification postcard; No prior telephone call
Outcomes	Response period within 43 days
Topic	Non-health: Customer reaction to energy rebate programme
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Author contacted: reported adequate allocation concealment

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Svoboda 2001

Methods	Random allocation: central randomisation	
Data	Head injured adults in the CRASH trial (Czech Republic)	
Comparisons	1. 1-page questionnaire 2. 3- page questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response within 3 months	
Topic	Health: Disability after traumatic brain injury	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Swan 1980

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals who had not responded to an earlier questionnaire	
Comparisons	1. Follow-up letter only 2. Follow-up letter and questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Perception of educational needs for the real estate profession, sale management practices, business planning, information about respondents firm	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Szirony 2002

Methods	Random allocation: using random table of numbers
Data	Faculty members from the top 100 graduate degree granting institutions in Nursing
Comparisons	1. Cover letter signed by a graduate student 2. Cover letter signed by a faculty member
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Publication, authorship, reporting of research results, funding, demographics
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	Inadequate

Tamayo-Sarver 2004

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in STATA
Data	Practicing Physicians with American College of Emergency Physicians membership
Comparisons	1. \$2 bill 2. Lottery to win \$250
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Diagnosis and treatment plan; practice environment
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Tambor 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Physicians (US)
Comparisons	1. Continuing medical education credits 2. No credits
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Genetic knowledge, psychometric scales, demographics
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Mainly males

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Taylor 1998

Methods	Random allocation: stratified random sampling method
Data	Young people in the Youth Cohort Study 8 sample, England
Comparisons	1. Preliminary notice letter 2. No preliminary notification
Outcomes	Response within approximately 2 months
Topic	Non-health: Attitudes and behaviour while transition from secondary school to labour market / tertiary education system
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Mean age: 16.5 years; Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Taylor 2006

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Participants registered in general practices in Aberdeen	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire printed in black ink 2. Questionnaire printed in green ink 3. Questionnaire sent in white envelope 4. Questionnaire sent in brown envelope	
Outcomes	Response period within 6 months	
Topic	Health: Screening questions for Parkinsonism; EuroQuol EQ5D	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Teisl 2005

Methods	Random allocation: using random number generated in Excel	
Data	US residents	
Comparisons	1. \$1 cash 2. \$2 cash 3. Phone card worth \$2 4. Phone card worth \$5	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: General perception of food and food processing, knowledge, and attitudes towards genetically modified foods	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Temple-Smith 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	General practitioners	
Comparisons	1. Pre-contact by GP researcher 2. Pre-contact by non-medical researcher (older woman) 3. Pre-contact by non-medical researcher (younger woman) 4. Pre-contact by non-medical researcher (younger man)	
Outcomes	Response within 8 weeks	
Topic	Health: Knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, and practice (KABP) in relation to Sexually Transmitted Diseases	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: Above 65 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Thistlethwaite 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	People aged 65 years and over from 7 counties in a Midwestern state of the USA
Comparisons	1. No offer of results (NO); Altruistic appeal (A); No demographic omission (No D) 2. NO; A; Demographic Omission (D) 3. NO; Egoistic Appeal (E); No D 4. NO; E; D 5. Offer of results (O); A; No D 6. O; A; D 7. O; E; No D 8. O; E; D
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks
Topic	Non-health: Characteristics most desired in retirement centre, leisure time activities
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author; Age: Above 65 years
<i>Risk of bias</i>	

Thistlethwaite 1993 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Thomson 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Practising GPs in Lothian, Scotland	
Comparisons	1. Lottery to win 6 bottles of champagne 2. Lottery to win 1 bottle of champagne	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: GPs opinions on toe nail surgery services offered by Podiatrists and Surgeons	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	Adequate

Tjerbo 2005

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Medical practitioners in Norway	
Comparisons	1. Unconditional scratch lottery 2. Conditional lottery to win a holiday trip worth 8,000 Norwegian Kronner 3. Control	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Relationship between primary care and secondary care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Language of publication is Norwegian	

Risk of bias

Tjerbo 2005 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Trussell 2004a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Households in the designated market area in the US who agreed to participate in the mail survey during the screening telephone survey	
Comparisons	1. No incentives 2. One \$1 bill 3. Two \$1 bills 4. Three \$1 bills 5. Four \$1 bills 6. Five \$1 bills 7. Six \$1 bills 8. Seven \$1 bills 9. Eight \$1 bills 10. Ten \$1 bills.	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Television viewing	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Larger incentive: From one \$1 bill to five \$1 bills; Smaller incentive: From six one \$1 bills to ten \$1 bills	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Trussell 2004b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Households in the designated market area in the US who were unable to contact during the screening telephone survey	
Comparisons	1. No incentives 2. One \$1 bill 3. Two \$1 bills 4. Three \$1 bills	

Trussell 2004b (Continued)

	5. Four \$1 bills 6. Five \$1 bills 7. Six \$1 bills 8. Seven \$1 bills 9. Eight \$1 bills 10. Ten \$1 bills	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Television viewing	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Larger incentive : From one \$1 bill to five \$1 bills; Smaller incentive: From six one \$1 bills to ten \$1 bills	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Trussell 2004c

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Households in the designated market area in the US who refused to participate in the mail survey during the screening telephone survey
Comparisons	1. No incentives 2. One \$1 bill 3. Two \$1 bills 4. Three \$1 bills 5. Four \$1 bills 6. Five \$1 bills 7. Six \$1 bills 8. Seven \$1 bills 9. Eight \$1 bills 10. Ten \$1 bills
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Television viewing
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Larger incentive : From one \$1 bill to five \$1 bills; Smaller incentive: From six one \$1 bills to ten \$1 bills
Risk of bias	

Trussell 2004c (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Tullar 1979

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Large manufacturing firms	
Comparisons	1. No follow up; No incentive 2. No follow up; 10 cents incentive 3. Follow up; No incentive 4. No follow up; 10 cents incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 8 weeks	
Topic	Non-health: Time for development of new product	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Tullar 2004

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Medicare recipients who underwent total hip replacement in 1995	
Comparisons	1. Hand-written addresses in the envelope of all outgoing mails 2. Computer-printed addresses in the envelope of all outgoing mails 3. Hand stamped envelopes 4. Institutionally metered postage	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: pain, functional status, satisfaction, complication, general health	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Tullar 2004 (Continued)

Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Tuten 2004

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Unemployed Croatians	
Comparisons	1. No incentives 2. Offer of study results 3. Lottery of 1000 Kuna with immediate notification of the results 4. Lottery of 1000 Kuna with delayed (after 1 month) notification of the results	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Psychosocial consequences of unemployment	
Mode of Administration	Electronic: Online survey	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ulrich 2005

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Nurse practitioners and physician assistants practising in primary care in the US	
Comparisons	1. No incentive 2. Unconditional \$5 prepaid token incentive 3. Conditional lottery to win one of ten \$100 prize draw	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Ethical concerns in the course of practice	

Ulrich 2005 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Urban 1993

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physicians providing primary care	
Comparisons	1. Return envelope with first class stamp 2. Business reply return envelope	
Outcomes	Response within 6 weeks	
Topic	Health: Attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding regular breast cancer screening	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 50-75 years; Mainly females	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

VanGeest 2001

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Physicians randomly selected from the American Medical Association's master file of all physicians practising in the US	
Comparisons	1. \$5 cash incentive 2. \$10 cash incentive 3. \$20 cash incentive	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Attitudes and responses in relation to utilisation and review pressure	

VanGeest 2001 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Veiga 1974

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Randomly selected managers	
Comparisons	1. Stamped return envelope 2. Business reply return envelope 3. Internal mail return	
Outcomes	Response within 4 weeks	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Virtanen 2007a

Methods	Random allocation: using split-panel design	
Data	Working-age population living in rural areas in Finland	
Comparisons	1. SMS reminder 2. Traditional post-card reminder	
Outcomes	Response period within 28 days	
Topic	Non-health: Information and Computer Technology (ICT) usage	

Virtanen 2007a (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Virtanen 2007b

Methods	Random allocation: using split-panel design	
Data	Welfare and health professionals in Finland	
Comparisons	1. SMS reminder 2. Traditional post-card reminder	
Outcomes	Response period within 28 days	
Topic	Health: Working and welfare conditions of health and social care workers	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Virtanen 2007c

Methods	Random allocation: using split-panel design	
Data	Members of trade union in Finland	
Comparisons	1. SMS reminder 2. Traditional post-card reminder	
Outcomes	Response period within 28 days	
Topic	Non-health: Employment	
Mode of Administration	Postal	

Virtanen 2007c (Continued)

Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Vocino 1977

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Members of the American Society for Public Administration	
Comparisons	1. Metered envelope 2. Commemorative stamp 3. Deadline 4. No deadline 5. Cover letter by well-known person in the discipline 6. Cover letter by unknown person in the discipline Factorial design	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Vogel 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals treated at an alcohol and drug treatment centre (Norway)	
Comparisons	1. Short questionnaire; Lottery (\$70) incentive if respond 2. Short questionnaire; No lottery incentive 3. Long questionnaire; Lottery (\$70) incentive if respond 4. Long questionnaire; No lottery incentive Follow up after 7 months	

Vogel 1992 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Post-discharge alcohol use, health status	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 42.4 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

VonRiesen 1979

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Veterinarians (Texas, US)	
Comparisons	1. Postcard reminders 8 days after initial mailing 2. Second copy of questionnaire, with cover letter and business reply envelope, 8 days after initial mailing 3. No follow up	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Supplier configuration, reasons for patronage, dollar amounts of annual purchases	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Waisanen 1954

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Equal numbers of families owning and not owning television sets	
Comparisons	1. Telephone pre-contact 2. No telephone pre-contact	

Waisanen 1954 (Continued)

Outcomes	Response within 10 days	
Topic	Non-health: Self-rating of personal possession, occupation, television, income, education	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Walker 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	General population controls in a leg ulcer study aged 40-99 years, randomly selected from the electoral roll, Auckland, New Zealand	
Comparisons	1. Glossy brochure enclosed 2. No glossy brochure	
Outcomes	Response by post	
Topic	Health: SF-36, HRQoL (Leg ulcers)	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Age: 40-90 years	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Waltemyer 2005

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I and III assistant softball coaches	
Comparisons	1. Signed cover letter 2. Unsigned cover letter	

Waltemyer 2005 (Continued)

	3. White questionnaire 4. Yellow questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ward 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Patients from a metropolitan general practice (Sydney, Australia)	
Comparisons	1. \$1 'scratchy' incentive with questionnaire 2. No incentive Follow up sent at 21 and 30 days	
Outcomes	Response within 30 days	
Topic	Health: SF-36, patient satisfaction, risk factors, chronic diseases	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Ward 1998

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Registered medical practitioners who had at least 1500 consultations per year	
Comparisons	1. Exhaustive pre-contact by telephone (continued until spoke to GP) 2. Gold pen incentive; University of NSW logo attached to questionnaire 3. Pre-contact letter with University of NSW crests Follow-up letter sent after 16 days to non-respondents. Second questionnaire sent after 23 days Telephone prompt from a non-medical research assistant after 39 days	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Cancer screening, personal and family history of cancer, socio- demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Warriner 1996

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Households listed in the Grand River Watershed region of south-western Ontario, Canada	
Comparisons	1. Monetary incentive 2. No monetary incentive 3. Offer to make a charitable donation or lottery 4. No offer Factorial design	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Environmental issues	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Author contacted: allocation was not concealed	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Warriner 1996 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate
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Weilbacher 1952

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	University alumni members (Columbia, US)
Comparisons	1. Personalised letter of transmittal 2. Non personalised letter of transmittal
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Not specified
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Weir 1999

Methods	Random allocation: computer algorithm
Data	Patients with cerebrovascular disease discharged from hospital
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire sent via GP 2. Questionnaire sent direct to participants by research group
Outcomes	-
Topic	Health: Stroke outcomes
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
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Weir 1999 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Wells 1984

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	University undergraduates
Comparisons	1. University sponsor; Business reply return envelope 2. University sponsor; No return postage 3. IRE sponsor; Business reply return envelope 4. IRE sponsor; No return postage
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Attitude measure - degree of satisfaction with the university's contribution to personal development
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Mainly females

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Weltzien 1986

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	Individuals who had terminated from mental health treatment centres
Comparisons	1. 2 cents incentive with questionnaire 2. No incentive
Outcomes	Response within 4 months
Topic	Health: Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ)
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Weltzien 1986 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Wensing 1999a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adult patients who had visited a GP	
Comparisons	1. Postal reminders 2. No reminders sent Reminder questionnaires sent at 3 weeks	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Europep - Patients evaluation of general practice care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Wensing 1999b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Adult patients who had visited a GP	
Comparisons	1. Postal reminders 2. No reminders sent Reminder questionnaires sent at 3 weeks	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Europep - Patients evaluation of general practice care	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Wensing 1999b (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Wensing 2005

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation
Data	Elderly adults registered with 26 general practitioners in the Netherlands
Comparisons	1. Simple reminder card 2. Reminder + questionnaire 3. Reminder with request to explain nonparticipation
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Health problems, health information sought, and attendance of general practice
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Whitcomb 2004

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified
Data	High school students who did not apply to the Liberal Arts College
Comparisons	1. E-mail file format - Text 2. E-mail file format - HTML 3. Background colour - White 4. Background colour - Black 5. Graphical design (Header) - Simple (Institution name only) 6. Graphical design (Header) - Complex (Mimicked University homepage - institutions name, campus photograph, quotation from the University president)
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Non-health: Perception of the college, reason for not applying

Whitcomb 2004 (Continued)

Mode of Administration	Electronic: Web-survey	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

White 1997

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	A random sample of marriage and family therapists from a list of all approved supervisors of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter; White questionnaire 2. Personalised cover letter; Blue questionnaire 3. Generic cover letter; White questionnaire 4. Generic cover letter; Blue questionnaire	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Demographics, Marriage and Family Therapist's supervision	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

White 2005a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Participants from the New Hampshire Women for Health (NHWH) study	
Comparisons	1. Inclusion of a pen in the second mailing study 2. No pen in the second mailing study	
Outcomes	Response period within 60 days	

White 2005a (Continued)

Topic	Health: Hormone replacement therapy, breast cancer, health-related quality of life	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

White 2005b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Vanguard participants from the 13 counties of Western Washington State	
Comparisons	1. Inclusion of a pencil in the second mailing study 2. No pencil in the second mailing study	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Vitamins and lifestyle	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Whiteman 2003

Methods	Random allocation: computerised random number generation	
Data	Women in the Baltimore Metropolitan area who reported their history of hot flashes	
Comparisons	1. Introductory postcard mailed 1 week before the questionnaire 2. Scratch-off lottery ticket worth \$1.00 3. \$1 bill 4. No incentives	
Outcomes	Response period within 95 days	

Whiteman 2003 (Continued)

Topic	Health: Risk of hot flashes in midlife women, pregnancy history, hormonal contraceptive use, menstrual history	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Yes	A - Adequate

Whitmore 1976

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals who had purchased a new car	
Comparisons	1. Key ring incentive with questionnaire 2. No incentive Follow up sent at 2 weeks	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Willits 1995

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Residents of Pennsylvania (US)	
Comparisons	1. No pre-amble; General question first 2. No pre-amble; General question last 3. Pre-amble; General first 4. Pre-amble; General last	

Willits 1995 (Continued)

	Follow up sent to non-respondents (postcard and 2 additional mailings including another copy of the questionnaire)	
Outcomes	-	
Topic	Health: Quality of life (QoL) in rural areas, QoL in relation to community spirit, health care services, recreational opportunities, job opportunities, air quality	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Mean age: 42.6 years; Mainly males	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Windsor 1992

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	Individuals listed on electoral registers	
Comparisons	1. Questionnaire included questions on ethnic origin and housing tenure 2. Questionnaire included question on housing tenure only 3. Questionnaire included question on ethnic origin only 4. Neither question included 2 reminders sent	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Health: Health and hospital survey - health and hospital attendance, consultation with GPs, demographics, housing tenure	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Wiseman 1972

Methods	Random allocation: systematic allocation
Data	Residents of a suburban Boston community, USA
Comparisons	1. Telephone pre-notification - mail survey 2. No pre-notification - mail survey
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Birth control devices, legalising abortions, lowering the legal drinking age Non-health: Giving state aid to catholic schools
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Wiseman 1973

Methods	Random allocation: systematic allocation
Data	Residents in a statewide telephone listings, Massachusetts, USA
Comparisons	1. 10 cent incentive (MI); Postcard follow up 3 days after initial mailing (FU); Business reply envelope (BRE); Offer of survey results (OR) 2. MI; No follow up (No FU); BRE; OR 3. MI; FU; BRE; No offer of survey results (No OR) 4. MI; No FU; BRE; No OR 5. MI; FU; Stamped return envelope (SRE); OR 6. MI; No FU; SRE; OR 7. MI; FU; SRE; No OR 8. MI; No FU; SRE; No OR 9. No monetary incentive (NI); FU; BRE; OR 10. NI; No FU; BRE; OR 11. NI; FU; BRE; No OR 12. NI; No FU; BRE; No OR 13. NI; FU; SRE; OR 14. NI; No FU; SRE; OR 15. NI; FU; SRE; No OR 16. NI; No FU; SRE; No OR
Outcomes	Response period not specified

Wiseman 1973 (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Attitudes and opinions about Massachusetts state lottery	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Woodward 1985

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	Household members (South Australia)	
Comparisons	1. Cover letter included offer of chance to win free dinner 2. Cover letter did not include offer Follow up at 1, 3 and 7 weeks	
Outcomes	Response within 10 weeks	
Topic	Health: Respiratory history of the youngest child	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Worthen 1985a

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	School teachers listed on the Education Association Membership roster (Utah, US)	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter 2. Form cover letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Worthen 1985a (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Classroom teachers opinion about what should be taught in educational measurement course	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Worthen 1985b

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	School teachers listed on the Education Association Membership roster (Utah, US) who did not respond to an earlier questionnaire with a personalised letter	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter 2. Form cover letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Classroom teachers opinion about what should be taught in educational measurement course	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Worthen 1985c

Methods	Random allocation: method not specified	
Data	School teachers listed on the Education Association Membership roster (Utah, US) who did not respond to an earlier questionnaire with a standard form letter	
Comparisons	1. Personalised cover letter 2. Form cover letter	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	

Worthen 1985c (Continued)

Topic	Non-health: Classroom teachers opinion about what should be taught in educational measurement course	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors’ judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Wotruba 1966

Methods	Random allocation: systematic division of a random sample	
Data	Urban household residents	
Comparisons	1. 25 cents sent with questionnaire 2. 50 cents promised on return of questionnaire 3. No incentive	
Outcomes	Response within 6 weeks	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Wright 1984

Methods	Random allocation: alternation	
Data	People listed in the latest telephone directories, New Zealand 1983	
Comparisons	1. Personal salutation (P); Black and white letterhead (BW); White outward envelope (Wh); \$100 cash lottery incentive (Ca) 2. P; BW; Wh; Garden voucher lottery incentive (Ga) 3. P; BW; Brown outward envelope (Br); Ca 4. P; BW; Br; Ga	

Wright 1984 (Continued)

	5. P; Coloured letterhead (Co); Wh; Ca 6. P; Co; Wh; Ga 7. P; Co; Br; Ca 8. P; Co; Br; Ga 9. Impersonal salutation (IP); BW; Wh; Ca 10. IP; BW; Wh; Ga 11. IP; BW; Br; Ca 12. IP; BW; Br; Ga 13. IP; Co; Wh; Ca 14. IP; Co; Wh; Ga 15. IP; Co; Br; Ca 16. IP; Co; Br; Ga	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Non-health: Motivation of gardeners and users of garden products, socio-demographics	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Wright 1995

Methods	Random allocation: systematic sample from list ordered alphabetically	
Data	New Zealand councillors who had participated in another survey 18 months previously	
Comparisons	1. Pre-notification letter sent 2 weeks prior to questionnaire mailing 2. No pre-contact	
Outcomes	Response after 2 follow-up reminders	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	
<i>Risk of bias</i>		
Item	Authors' judgement	Description

Wright 1995 (Continued)

Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear
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Wunder 1988

Methods	Random allocation: alternation
Data	Subscribers to a large health maintenance organisation in a major metropolitan area in the Midwestern United States
Comparisons	1. Hand addressed envelope 2. Computer generated address on envelope
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Satisfaction benefit package, characteristics of subscribers
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	Method of allocation ascertained through contact with author

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Wynn 1985

Methods	Random allocation: alternation
Data	Members, past and present, of an exercise and recreational club in a medium-sized south-western city (US)
Comparisons	1. No pre-contact by telephone 2. Telephone pre-contact asking permission to send questionnaire (foot-in-the-door manipulation) 3. Telephone pre-contact asking questions (probe-foot-in-the-door manipulation)
Outcomes	Response period not specified
Topic	Health: Planning of a possible expansion effort for an exercise recreational club
Mode of Administration	Postal
Notes	-

Risk of bias

Wynn 1985 (Continued)

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	No	C - Inadequate

Zusman 1987

Methods	Random allocation: on the basis of study identification number and done without reference to subject characteristics	
Data	Undergraduate transfer students	
Comparisons	1. \$1 incentive sent with first mailing 2. No incentive sent Follow up of non-respondents several weeks after first mailing	
Outcomes	Response period not specified	
Topic	Not specified	
Mode of Administration	Postal	
Notes	-	

Risk of bias

Item	Authors' judgement	Description
Allocation concealment?	Unclear	B - Unclear

Characteristics of excluded studies [ordered by study ID]

Study	Reason for exclusion
Allen 1980	The comparison in this study is biased by the fact that people in the pre-notification group are given the choice of whether to receive the questionnaire or not whereas people in the no pre-notification group are not given this choice
Anderson 1975	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised
Angus 2003	Not a randomised controlled trial.
Armstrong 1975	Review article.

(Continued)

Asch 1994	The comparison in this study is confounded - the author, with reference to the several differences between the 2 mailing strategies, states 'We cannot determine which of these differences underlies our results.'
Ash 1952	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact the author have been unsuccessful
Baron 2001	The comparison in this study is confounded by colour of the questionnaire
Bevis 1948	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised
Biggar 1992	All comparisons in the study are confounded.
Blumberg 1974	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised and the data which would be needed is only referred to not presented. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Blumenfeld 1973	It was not going to be possible to determine whether this study was randomised as the author has died
Brechner 1976	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Brennan 1958	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Brennan 1990	The comparison in this study is confounded.
Cartwright 1968	The comparison of different lengths is confounded by other differences between the two questionnaires
Cartwright 1989	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Contact details of the author is unavailable
Champion 1969	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Childs 2005	The study did not calculate the response for the different order of administration of the questionnaires
Cook 1985	Incentive only given after agreement to participate in a further study, not just for returning the questionnaire
Dillman 1972	No useful experimental data presented.
Dunlap 1950	It is not possible to determine whether this study was testing return rate of a questionnaire. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Eisinger 1974	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact authors have been unsuccessful

(Continued)

Elinson 1950	There is insufficient data presented in this paper to include it. It has also not been possible to determine whether the questionnaire in the experiment is postal. Attempts to contact authors have been unsuccessful
Everett 1997	The comparison in this study is confounded by colour of the questionnaire
Fang 2006	This study did not calculate the response but inspected the correlation between the material incentive and the participants characteristics
Ferriss 1951	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Furse 1981	Authors cannot remember whether the study was randomised.
Gerace 1995	This study examines response rates of a postal request for more information not a questionnaire
Gillespie 1975	The comparison in this study is confounded.
Hansen 2004	Not a randomised controlled trial.
Hare 1998	The comparison in this study is confounded by colour of the questionnaire
Harlow 1993	Examines response rates to telephone interviews not postal questionnaires
Haugejorden 1987	Randomised controlled trial but not of methods to increase response to postal questionnaires
Hawes 1987	Author no longer has original data to be able to provide confirmation of numbers of questionnaires administered and returned
Heads 1966	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Heje 2006	The primary questionnaire was delivered personally to the patient either at the surgery or at home
Helgeson 2002	Author no longer has original data to be able to provide confirmation of numbers of questionnaires administered and returned
Hing 2005	Not a postal questionnaire.
Hinrichs 1975	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Hughes 1989	Author was contacted: the study records have been discarded.
Ives 1990	Author was contacted: confirmed that participants were not randomly allocated
Jiang 2005	Not a randomised controlled trial.

(Continued)

Kerin 1974	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Kerin 1977	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Kerin 1983	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Kimball 1961	It was not possible to confirm that this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Larsson 1970	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Longworth 1953	Author drew six different samples, and tested a different type of intervention on each without a comparison group
Lopez- Cano 2007	Not a randomised controlled trial.
Lund 1988	Comparisons of questionnaires which were mailed are confounded
Marks 1981	Author cannot remember whether the study was randomised.
May 1960	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
McDermott 2003	Incentives were same for all the three questionnaires.
Mehta 1995	Two groups received postal questionnaires, but one group received a combination of methods (monetary incentive, pre-notification and follow-up). Comparisons for combinations of methods have not been created in this review
Nitecki 1975	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Oden 1999	The comparison in this study is confounded by colour of questionnaire
Perneger 2003	The intervention did not include strategies to increase response to a postal or electronic questionnaire
Peytremann-Bridevaux 2006a	The intervention did not include strategies to increase response to a postal or electronic questionnaire
Porter 2004	The data presented in this paper are the same as that presented in an earlier paper Porter 2003
Pottick 1991	This study examines postal methods to improve response to a face to face survey
Robin 1973	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful

(Continued)

Robin 1976	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Roeher 1963	It is not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Rudd 1980	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Salomone 1978	The number of people allocated to each experimental group is not presented and attempts to obtain this information from the authors have been unsuccessful
Senf 1987	Option to refuse postcards were sent to half of all participants prior to sending questionnaire. However, response rates to questionnaires could not be compared because questionnaires were returned anonymously
Shackleton 1982	The data presented in this paper are the same as that presented in an earlier paper by Shackleton (1980)
Shermis 1982	Comparisons of questionnaires which were mailed are confounded
Sheth 1975	The data presented in this paper are from the same study as those presented in an included study by Roscoe and Sheth (1975)
Sirken 1960	Could not confirm random allocation. Author contacted: stated only that "this was not a clinical trial."
Smith 1972	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Smith 1977	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Smith 1987	It was not possible to determine how many participants were allocated to each experimental group and attempts to obtain this information from the authors have been unsuccessful
Snyder 1984	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Suhre 1989	Analyses by means of logit analysis and no useable outcome data were available. Author contacted: no useable data obtained
Sullivan 1995	Comparison groups do not meet 'postal questionnaire' criteria
Sutherland 1996	There are too many differences between the two groups to be able to compare any of these differences without confounding
Tan 1997	Review article.

(Continued)

Trice 1985	Not a postal questionnaire.
Walker 1977	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Ward 1994	All comparisons in the study are confounded.
Watson 1965	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Weiss 1985	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Attempts to contact author have been unsuccessful
Weissenburger 1987	It was not possible to determine whether this study was randomised. Contact details of the author is unavailable
Wildman 1977	The comparison in this study is confounded by paper quality.
Zagumny 1996	Not a postal questionnaire.
Zwisler 2004	Review article.

DATA AND ANALYSES

Comparison 1. Monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	56	61094	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.17 [1.95, 2.41]
2 Final response	94	160004	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.87 [1.73, 2.03]
3 e - Log	1	1102	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.99 [0.74, 1.32]
4 e - Submission	1	1102	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.19 [0.82, 1.75]

Comparison 2. Larger vs. smaller monetary incentive

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	13	12279	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.25 [1.10, 1.41]
2 Final response	37	84043	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.26 [1.14, 1.39]

Comparison 3. Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	4	8650	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.77 [1.17, 2.68]
2 Final response	13	26484	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.62 [1.39, 1.88]
3 e - Login	1	1100	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.66 [0.50, 0.87]
4 e - Submission	2	2856	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.77 [0.48, 1.23]

Comparison 4. Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	44	65687	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.17 [1.08, 1.25]
2 Final response	94	135934	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.15 [1.08, 1.22]
3 e - Login	2	10035	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.32 [1.09, 1.59]
4 e - Submission	6	17493	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.72 [1.09, 2.72]

Comparison 5. Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	3632	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.18 [1.01, 1.39]
2 Final response	7	10730	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.09 [0.97, 1.22]
3 e - Login	1	7322	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.11 [0.91, 1.35]
4 e - Submission	7	31454	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.95 [0.78, 1.15]

Comparison 6. Immediate notification of lottery results vs. delayed notification

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	1	2233	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.37 [1.13, 1.65]

Comparison 7. Higher denominations in monetary lottery incentives vs. lower

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	2	4721	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.00 [0.87, 1.14]

Comparison 8. Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	12	19724	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.00 [1.54, 2.60]
2 Final response	24	27569	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.61 [1.36, 1.89]
3 e - Log	1	736	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.90 [0.64, 1.27]
4 e - Submission	3	1401	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.08 [0.77, 1.50]

Comparison 9. Incentive with first vs. subsequent mailing

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	7924	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.20 [1.66, 2.92]
2 Final response	3	7924	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.14 [1.02, 1.28]

Comparison 10. Unconditional and conditional incentives vs. conditional incentives

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	1	1061	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.19 [0.92, 1.54]

Comparison 11. Offer of survey results vs. no offer

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	7	11095	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.01 [0.85, 1.20]
2 Final response	12	15256	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.90 [0.76, 1.07]
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	1	2332	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.36 [1.15, 1.61]

Comparison 12. Shorter vs. longer questionnaire

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	17	21885	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.15 [1.02, 1.30]
2 Final response	56	60119	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.64 [1.43, 1.87]
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	2	7589	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.73 [1.40, 2.13]

Comparison 13. Double postcard vs. one page

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.66 [0.48, 0.91]
2 Final response	1	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.47 [0.34, 0.66]

Comparison 14. More vs. less personalised

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	30	23111	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.22 [1.09, 1.37]
2 Final response	58	60184	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.14 [1.07, 1.22]
3 e - Login	5	24557	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.26 [1.13, 1.40]
4 e - Submission	12	48910	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.24 [1.17, 1.32]

Comparison 15. Hand-written vs. typed/facsimile/scanned/printed signature on covering letter

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	590	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.08 [0.75, 1.54]
2 Final response	14	15006	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.24 [1.08, 1.41]

Comparison 16. Hand-written address vs. computer-printed

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	1492	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.37 [0.95, 1.98]
2 Final response	7	5091	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.25 [1.08, 1.45]

Comparison 17. Signed vs. unsigned

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	1030	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.34 [0.97, 1.85]

Comparison 18. Identifying feature on return vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	4	3084	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.06 [0.68, 1.64]
2 Final response	8	4134	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.12 [0.82, 1.52]

Comparison 19. Identifying number on return vs. other identifier

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	741	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.00 [0.68, 1.46]
2 Final response	1	741	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.00 [0.68, 1.46]

Comparison 20. Brown vs. white envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	5423	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.44 [0.73, 2.83]
2 Final response	5	8637	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.23 [0.81, 1.87]

Comparison 21. Coloured vs. white questionnaire

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	6	14005	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.07 [0.99, 1.15]
2 Final response	14	41421	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.04 [0.99, 1.10]

Comparison 22. Coloured vs. standard (black/blue) ink

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	6064	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.25 [1.03, 1.53]
2 Final response	3	7040	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.16 [0.95, 1.42]

Comparison 23. Coloured vs. black & white letterhead

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	1650	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.99 [0.80, 1.24]
2 Final response	2	2356	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.08 [0.91, 1.28]

Comparison 24. Illustration on cover of q'aire largely in black vs. largely in white

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	320	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.62 [1.04, 2.53]

Comparison 25. Folder or booklet vs. stapled pages

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	1845	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.17 [0.94, 1.45]
2 Final response	3	5681	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.10 [0.99, 1.23]

Comparison 26. Large paper size vs. small

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	2000	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.88 [0.71, 1.09]
2 Final response	2	2145	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.88 [0.56, 1.39]

Comparison 27. Dot matrix print vs. letter quality print

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	176	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.15 [0.63, 2.10]

Comparison 28. Questionnaire printed on high vs. standard quality paper or thick paper vs. thin

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	1039	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.80 [0.60, 1.06]

Comparison 29. Single vs. double-sided questionnaire

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	608	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.34 [0.96, 1.87]
2 Final response	4	4966	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.22 [1.01, 1.47]

Comparison 30. Large font size vs. small

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	650	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.26 [0.87, 1.82]

Comparison 31. Study logo on several items in the mailing package vs. on questionnaire only

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	1000	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.92 [0.72, 1.18]

Comparison 32. Picture of researcher/images vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	384	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.98 [0.61, 1.58]
2 Final response	4	3710	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.07 [0.76, 1.53]
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	2	720	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	3.05 [1.84, 5.06]

Comparison 33. Attractive vs. less attractive picture

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	2	520	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	3.44 [0.72, 16.49]

Comparison 34. Cartoons included vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	280	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.0 [0.62, 1.62]

Comparison 35. Matrix vs. standard form

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	316	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.61 [0.32, 1.19]
2 Final response	2	316	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.58 [0.29, 1.16]

Comparison 36. Questions ordered by time period vs. other order

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
2 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
3 Final response	1	259	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.48 [0.84, 2.59]

Comparison 37. Subject line vs. blank

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 e - Login	2	6152	Odds Ratio (M-H, Fixed, 95% CI)	0.84 [0.71, 0.99]
2 e - Submission	2	6152	Odds Ratio (M-H, Fixed, 95% CI)	0.84 [0.71, 1.01]

Comparison 38. "Survey" subject line vs. blank

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 e - Login	2	3845	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.80 [0.67, 0.97]
2 e - Submission	2	3845	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.81 [0.67, 0.97]

Comparison 39. Text vs. HTML file formats

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 e - Submission	1	6090	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.0 [0.84, 1.19]

Comparison 40. White background vs. black

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 e - Submission	1	6090	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.31 [1.10, 1.56]

Comparison 41. Header vs. no header

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 e - Submission	1	6090	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.13 [0.90, 1.41]

Comparison 42. Simple vs. complex header

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 e - Submission	1	5075	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.23 [1.03, 1.48]

Comparison 43. Textual presentation of response categories vs. visual presentation

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	1	5413	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.19 [1.05, 1.36]

Comparison 44. Stamped vs. franked outward envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	930	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.04 [0.79, 1.37]
2 Final response	6	13964	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.95 [0.88, 1.03]

Comparison 45. First vs. second/third class outward mailing

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	7370	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.12 [1.02, 1.23]
2 Final response	2	8300	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.11 [1.02, 1.21]

Comparison 46. Commemorative/race-specific vs. ordinary stamp on return envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	2430	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.91 [0.66, 1.24]
2 Final response	5	5461	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.92 [0.81, 1.06]

Comparison 47. Certified/special delivery vs. regular outward mailing

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	9	15193	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.32 [1.55, 3.46]
2 Final response	15	18931	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.76 [1.43, 2.18]

Comparison 48. Stamped vs. business reply/franked return envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	15	27234	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.24 [1.12, 1.36]
2 Final response	27	48612	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.24 [1.14, 1.35]

Comparison 49. Priority stamps vs. first-class stamps on return envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	205	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.26 [0.14, 0.46]

Comparison 50. First vs. second class stamp on return envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	800	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.91 [0.69, 1.21]

Comparison 51. Multiple stamps vs. single stamp on return envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	510	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.44 [1.01, 2.04]

Comparison 52. Questionnaire sent to work vs. home address

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	1140	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.16 [0.89, 1.52]
2 Final response	2	1140	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.16 [0.89, 1.52]

Comparison 53. Pre-paid return envelope vs. not pre-paid

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	2740	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.23 [0.78, 1.95]
2 Final response	4	4094	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.09 [0.71, 1.68]

Comparison 54. Stamped addressed return envelope vs. address label only included

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	147	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.86 [0.45, 1.65]

Comparison 55. Q'aire mailed in large vs. standard/small envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	1200	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.93 [0.74, 1.17]

Comparison 56. Window vs. regular envelope

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	11781	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.85 [0.68, 1.06]
2 Final response	2	11781	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.96 [0.61, 1.49]

Comparison 57. Postal + optional Internet response vs. only postal response

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	4213	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.99 [0.87, 1.13]
2 Final response	1	4213	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.93 [0.82, 1.05]

Comparison 58. Questionnaire mailed on Monday vs. Friday

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	504	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.83 [0.58, 1.17]
2 Final response	1	504	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.83 [0.58, 1.17]

Comparison 59. Questionnaire received on Monday vs. Friday

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	460	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.0 [0.64, 1.56]

Comparison 60. Q'aire sent 1-5 weeks vs. 9-14 weeks after hospital discharge

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	2324	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.26 [0.69, 7.37]

Comparison 61. Pre-contact vs. no pre-contact

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	24	49019	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.50 [1.26, 1.78]
2 Final response	47	79651	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.45 [1.29, 1.63]

Comparison 62. Pre-contact by phone vs. mail

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	978	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.40 [1.02, 1.93]
2 Final response	7	3322	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.18 [0.77, 1.80]

Comparison 63. Follow up vs. no follow up

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	10	10738	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.56 [1.22, 2.00]
2 Final response	19	32778	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.35 [1.18, 1.55]

Comparison 64. Postal follow-up including vs. excluding q'aire

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	6	5261	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.20 [0.89, 1.61]
2 Final response	11	8619	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.46 [1.13, 1.90]

Comparison 65. Follow up by phone vs. mail

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First Response	4	1198	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.67 [0.46, 0.97]
2 Final Response	5	2254	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.86 [0.54, 1.36]

Comparison 66. Telephone reminder vs. no reminder

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	143	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	4.29 [1.70, 10.81]
2 Final response	3	13922	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.29 [0.85, 1.96]

Comparison 67. SMS vs. postcard reminder

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	3	9947	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.49 [1.23, 1.81]

Comparison 68. Follow-up interval < 31 days vs. 31-60 days

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	1608	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.87 [0.50, 1.50]
2 Final response	2	1608	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.97 [0.75, 1.26]

Comparison 69. Sensitive questions vs. no/fewer/less sensitive questions asked

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	5	11292	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.98 [0.90, 1.07]
2 Final response	10	21393	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.94 [0.88, 1.00]

Comparison 70. More relevant questions first vs. last

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	5817	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.28 [1.15, 1.42]
2 Final response	1	5817	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.23 [1.10, 1.37]

Comparison 71. Most general question first vs. last

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	3	11435	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.95 [0.83, 1.09]

Comparison 72. Demographic items first vs. last

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	1040	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.06 [0.83, 1.36]
2 Final response	4	3598	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.08 [0.94, 1.25]

Comparison 73. Easier questions first vs. last

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	240	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.80 [0.91, 3.56]
2 Final response	2	3182	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.61 [1.14, 2.26]

Comparison 74. User friendly vs. standard questionnaire

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	3540	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.46 [1.21, 1.75]
2 Final response	1	3540	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.46 [1.21, 1.75]

Comparison 75. More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	2151	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.44 [1.99, 3.01]
2 Final response	3	2711	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.00 [1.32, 3.04]
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Fixed, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	1	2176	Odds Ratio (M-H, Fixed, 95% CI)	1.85 [1.52, 2.26]

Comparison 76. Open-ended vs. closed questions

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	372	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.38 [0.25, 0.59]
2 Final response	3	1764	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.31 [0.09, 1.04]

Comparison 77. Open-ended items first vs. other items first

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	300	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.89 [0.55, 1.44]
2 Final response	1	300	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.26 [0.73, 2.19]

Comparison 78. Closed-ended items first vs. other items first

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	300	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.15 [0.71, 1.86]
2 Final response	1	300	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.93 [0.54, 1.59]

Comparison 79. 'Don't know' boxes included vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	1360	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.03 [0.82, 1.29]

Comparison 80. Circle answer vs. tick box format

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	1125	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.96 [0.74, 1.26]

Comparison 81. Response options listed in increasing vs. decreasing order

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	6783	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.06 [0.94, 1.18]

Comparison 82. High vs. medium frequency response alternatives

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	3882	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.40 [0.58, 3.38]

Comparison 83. 5-step vs. 10-step response scale

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	654	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.78 [0.52, 1.19]

Comparison 84. Check categories or specify numbers vs. check categories only

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	740	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.80 [0.60, 1.06]
2 Final response	1	740	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.80 [0.60, 1.06]

Comparison 85. Individual item vs. stem & leaf format

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	1500	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.88 [0.70, 1.10]

Comparison 86. Horizontal vs. vertical orientation of response options

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	400	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	3.12 [1.63, 5.96]

Comparison 87. Conventional vs. randomised response technique

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	5830	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.89 [1.69, 2.11]
2 Final response	4	7345	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.52 [0.85, 2.72]

Comparison 88. Factual questions only vs. factual and attitudinal questions

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	1280	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.34 [1.01, 1.77]

Comparison 89. Teaser on envelope vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	190	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	3.08 [1.27, 7.44]
2 Final response	1	190	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	3.08 [1.27, 7.44]

Comparison 90. Questionnaire sent with supplement vs. alone

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	1795	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.86 [0.70, 1.07]

Comparison 91. Extra questionnaire for relatives included vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	4943	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.67 [0.60, 0.76]

Comparison 92. Consent form included vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	414	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.21 [0.81, 1.81]
2 Final response	1	414	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.32 [0.89, 1.95]

Comparison 93. Multi-option vs. standard consent form

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	200	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.91 [0.49, 1.68]

Comparison 94. University sponsor/source vs. other

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	4	5241	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.35 [0.88, 2.08]
2 Final response	14	21628	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.32 [1.13, 1.54]
3 e - Login	2	3845	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.80 [0.67, 0.96]
4 e - Submission	2	3845	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.84 [0.69, 1.01]

Comparison 95. Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	1484	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.06 [0.85, 1.31]
2 Final response	10	5644	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.05 [0.89, 1.23]
3 e - Login	1	17346	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.98 [0.91, 1.06]
4 e - Submission	3	23027	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.05 [0.95, 1.15]

Comparison 96. University printed envelope vs. plain

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	500	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.10 [0.77, 1.57]
2 Final response	1	500	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.88 [0.61, 1.28]

Comparison 97. Pre-contact by medical researcher vs. non medical researcher

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	924	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.01 [0.55, 1.86]

Comparison 98. Q'aire sent by GP vs. by research group

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	409	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.49 [1.00, 2.24]
2 Final response	2	1106	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.52 [0.73, 3.15]

Comparison 99. Ethnically unidentifiable/white vs. other name

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.12 [0.79, 1.59]
2 Final response	5	5959	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.07 [0.90, 1.27]

Comparison 100. Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	204	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.42 [0.76, 2.64]
2 Final response	2	3146	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.07 [0.72, 1.58]
3 e - Login	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
4 e - Submission	2	720	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.55 [0.38, 0.80]

Comparison 101. Assurance of confidentiality vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	25000	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.33 [1.24, 1.42]

Comparison 102. Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	468	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.12 [0.76, 1.65]
2 Final response	1	468	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.12 [0.76, 1.65]
3 e - Login	1	8586	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.41 [1.28, 1.56]
4 e - Submission	1	8586	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.52 [1.36, 1.70]

Comparison 103. Choice to opt-out from study vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	515	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.10 [0.77, 1.56]
2 Final response	4	3555	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.92 [0.66, 1.28]

Comparison 104. Instructions given vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	2000	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.89 [0.74, 1.06]

Comparison 105. Response deadline given vs. no deadline

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	2575	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.25 [0.93, 1.69]
2 Final response	6	5661	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.00 [0.84, 1.19]
3 e - Login	1	8586	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.20 [1.07, 1.35]
4 e - Submission	1	8586	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.18 [1.03, 1.34]

Comparison 106. Mention of obligation to respond vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.61 [1.16, 2.22]
2 Final response	3	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.61 [1.16, 2.22]

Comparison 107. Request for telephone number vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	702	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.0 [0.65, 1.54]
2 Final response	1	702	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.0 [0.65, 1.54]

Comparison 108. Respond on questionnaire vs. on separate form

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	200	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.11 [0.59, 2.07]
2 Final response	1	200	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.13 [0.57, 2.27]

Comparison 109. Mention of follow-up contact vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	5	4553	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.16 [1.02, 1.33]
2 Final response	7	7053	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.02 [0.91, 1.15]

Comparison 110. Explanation for non-participation requested vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	667	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.97 [0.71, 1.32]
2 Final response	2	1907	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.14 [0.83, 1.57]

Comparison 111. Time estimate for completion given vs. not

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.10 [0.76, 1.58]
2 Final response	1	600	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.10 [0.76, 1.58]

Comparison 112. Detailed vs. brief cover letter

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	500	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.08 [0.74, 1.58]

Comparison 113. Appeal vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	1251	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.06 [0.79, 1.42]
3 e - Login	2	3845	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.85 [0.71, 1.02]
4 e - Submission	2	3844	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.84 [0.70, 1.01]

Comparison 114. Note requesting not to remove ID code vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	100	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.37 [0.14, 0.96]
2 Final response	1	100	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.37 [0.14, 0.96]

Comparison 115. Request for participant signature vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	1	201	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.19 [0.65, 2.18]

Comparison 116. Questionnaire endorsed vs. not endorsed

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	395	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.33 [0.15, 0.74]
2 Final response	1	395	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.63 [0.43, 0.94]

Comparison 117. Veiled threat in follow-up letter vs. none

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	671	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.09 [1.49, 2.93]
2 Final response	1	671	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	2.09 [1.49, 2.93]

Comparison 118. Appeal stresses benefit to sponsor vs. other

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	3	2376	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.20 [0.88, 1.63]
2 Final response	8	10908	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.99 [0.86, 1.13]

Comparison 119. Appeal stresses benefit to respondent vs. other

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	1	1500	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.97 [0.78, 1.21]
2 Final response	9	13175	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.98 [0.82, 1.16]

Comparison 120. Appeal stresses benefit to society vs. other

Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	2	1956	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.91 [0.59, 1.40]
2 Final response	10	12731	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	1.09 [0.92, 1.29]

Comparison 121. Anonymous vs. not anonymous

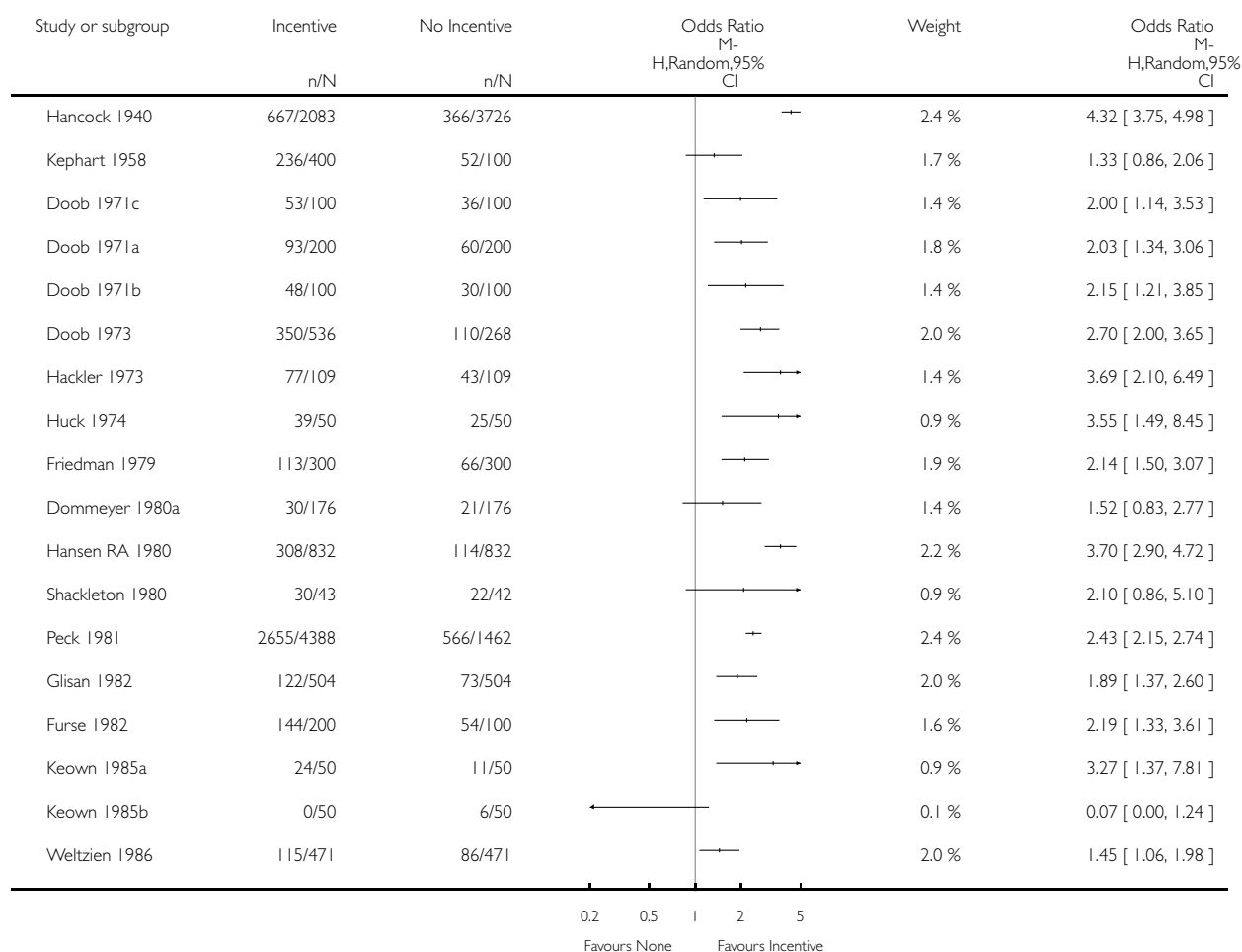
Outcome or subgroup title	No. of studies	No. of participants	Statistical method	Effect size
1 First response	0	0	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.0 [0.0, 0.0]
2 Final response	2	2070	Odds Ratio (M-H, Random, 95% CI)	0.96 [0.66, 1.39]

Analysis 1.1. Comparison 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 1 First response.

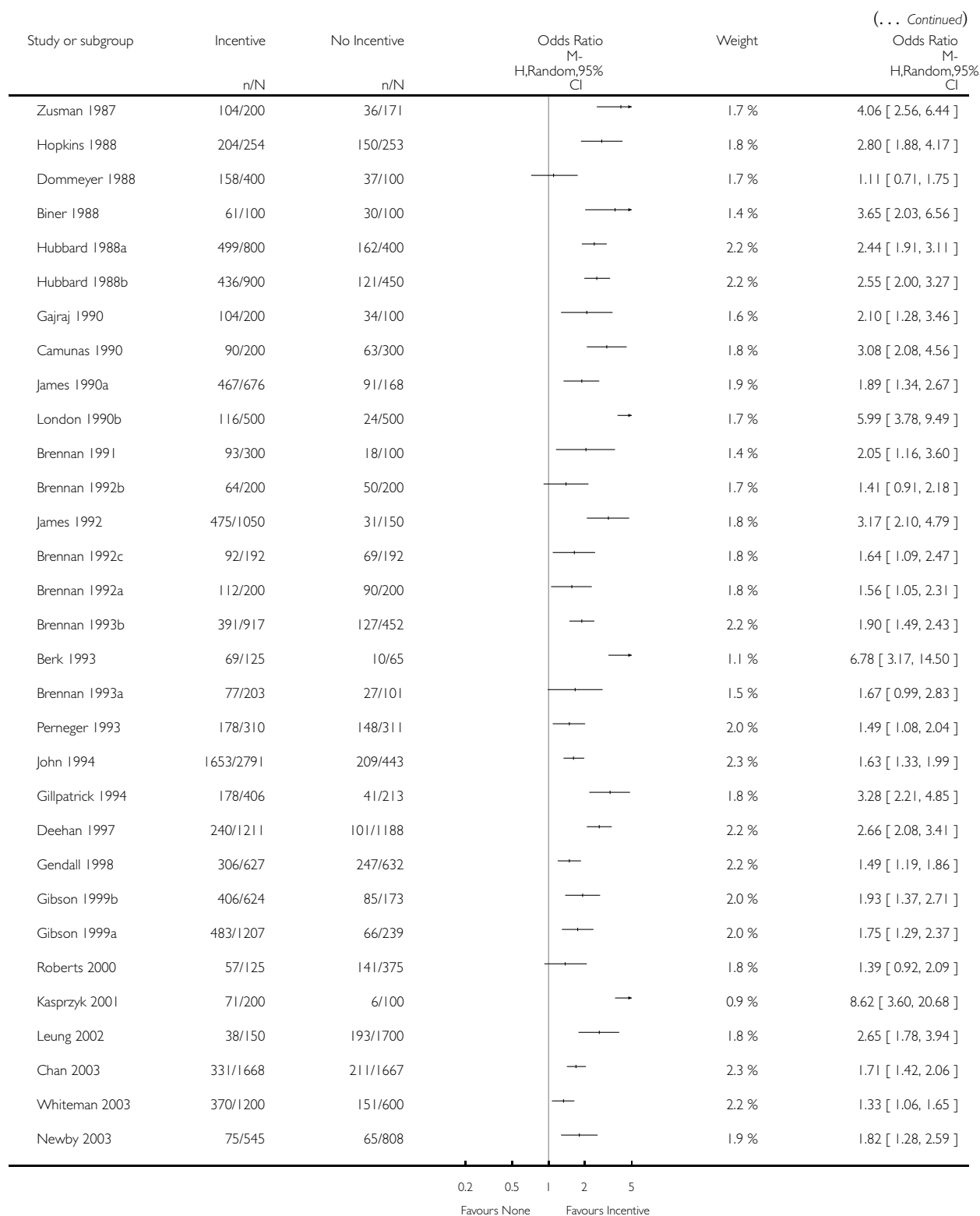
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

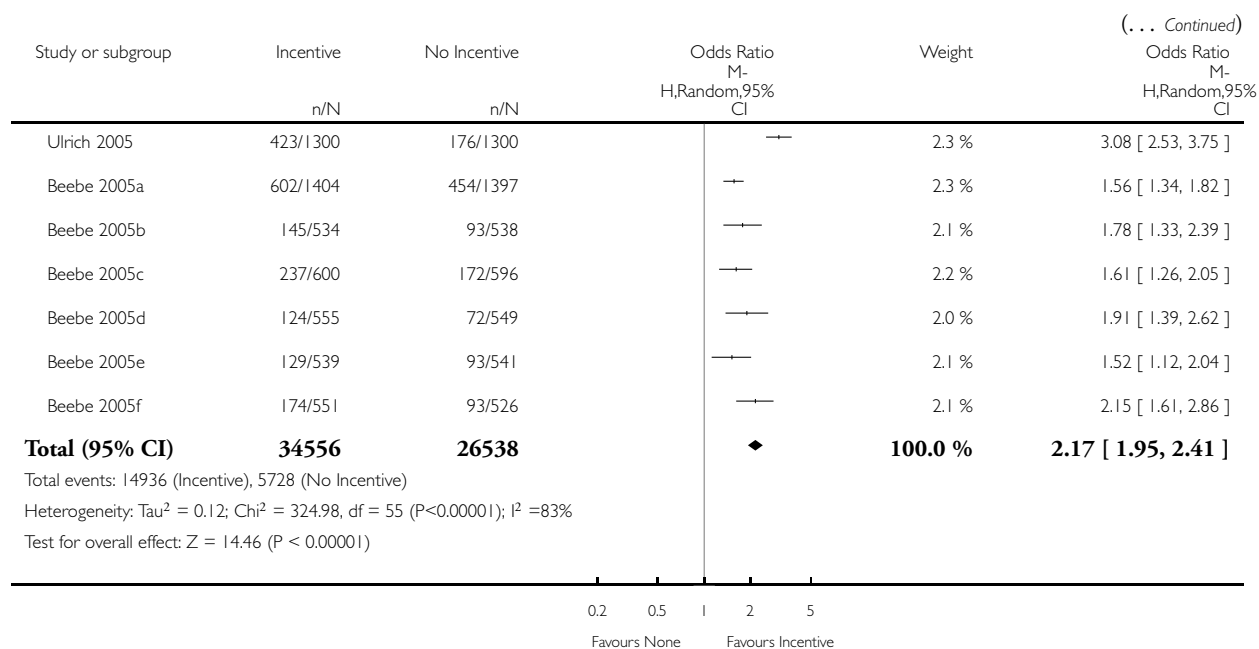
Comparison: 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome: 1 First response



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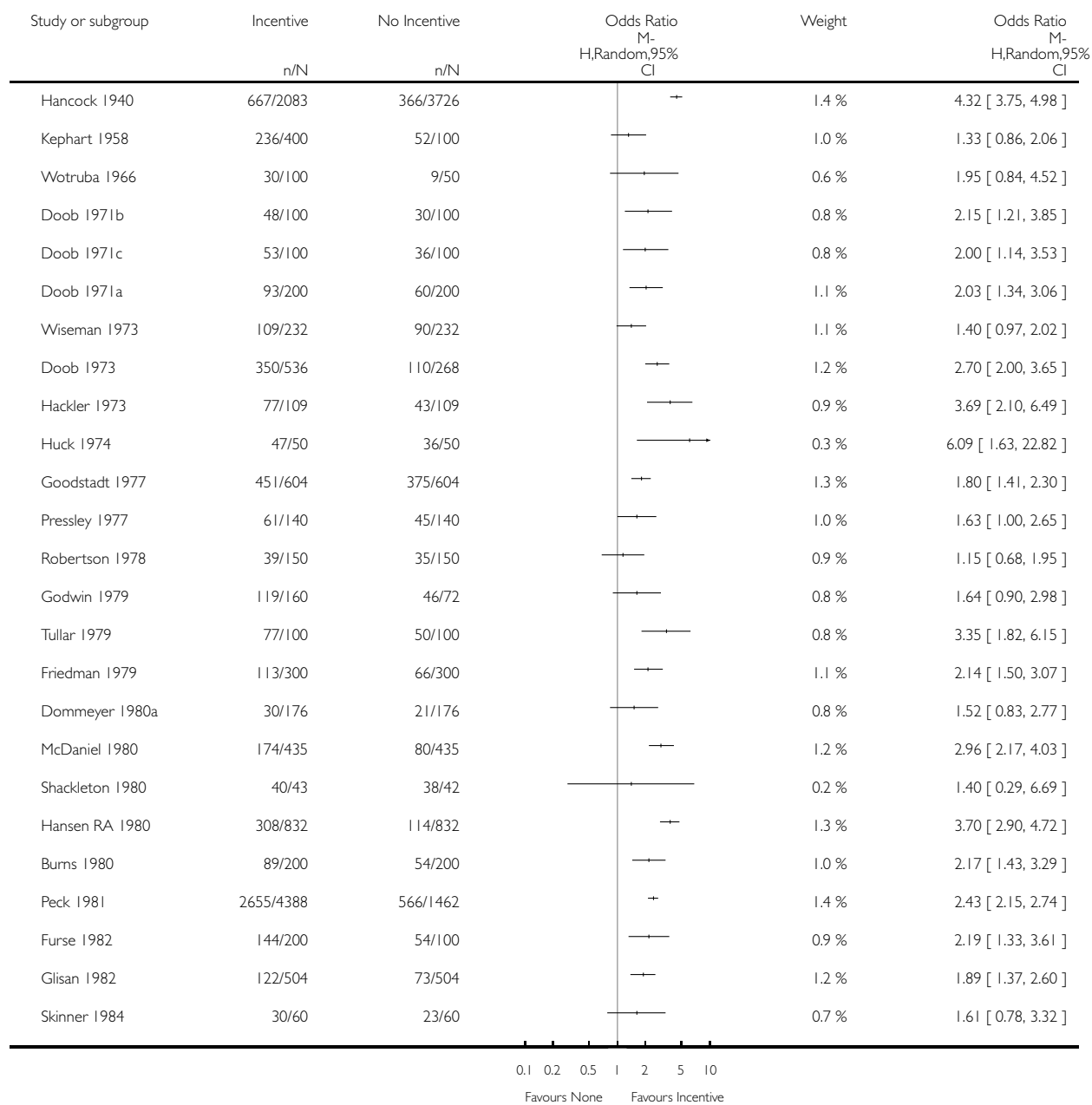


Analysis 1.2. Comparison 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 2 Final response.

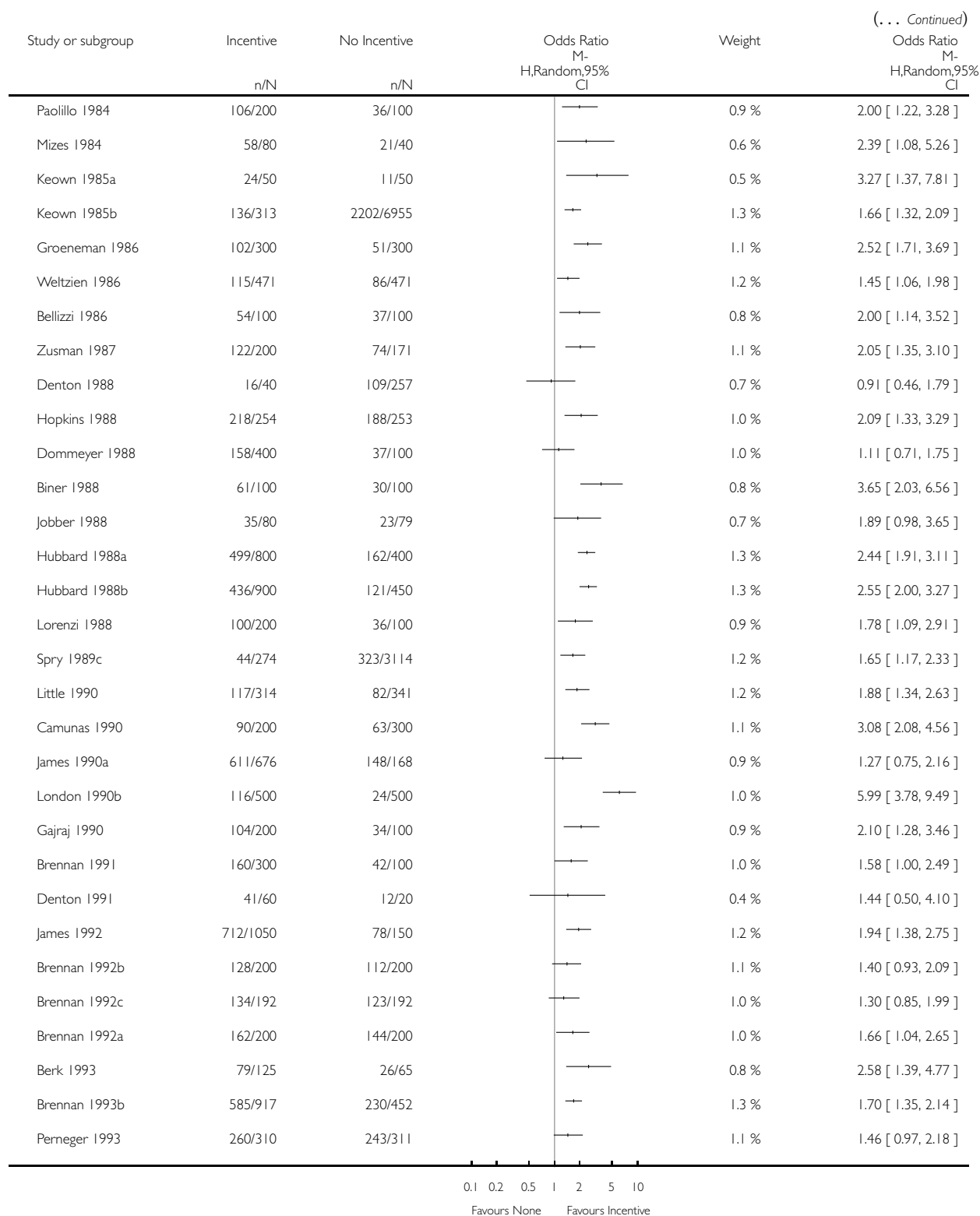
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

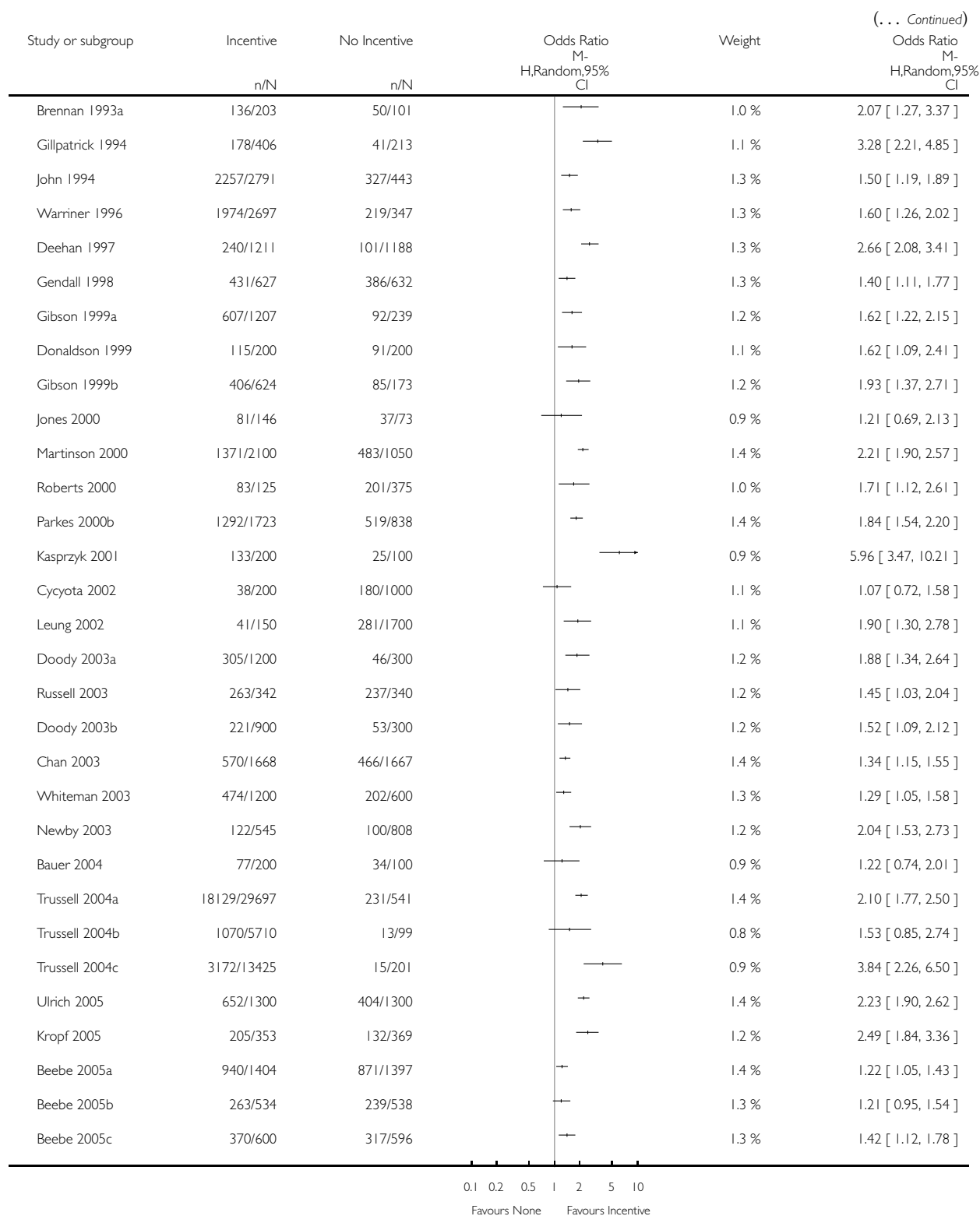
Comparison: 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive

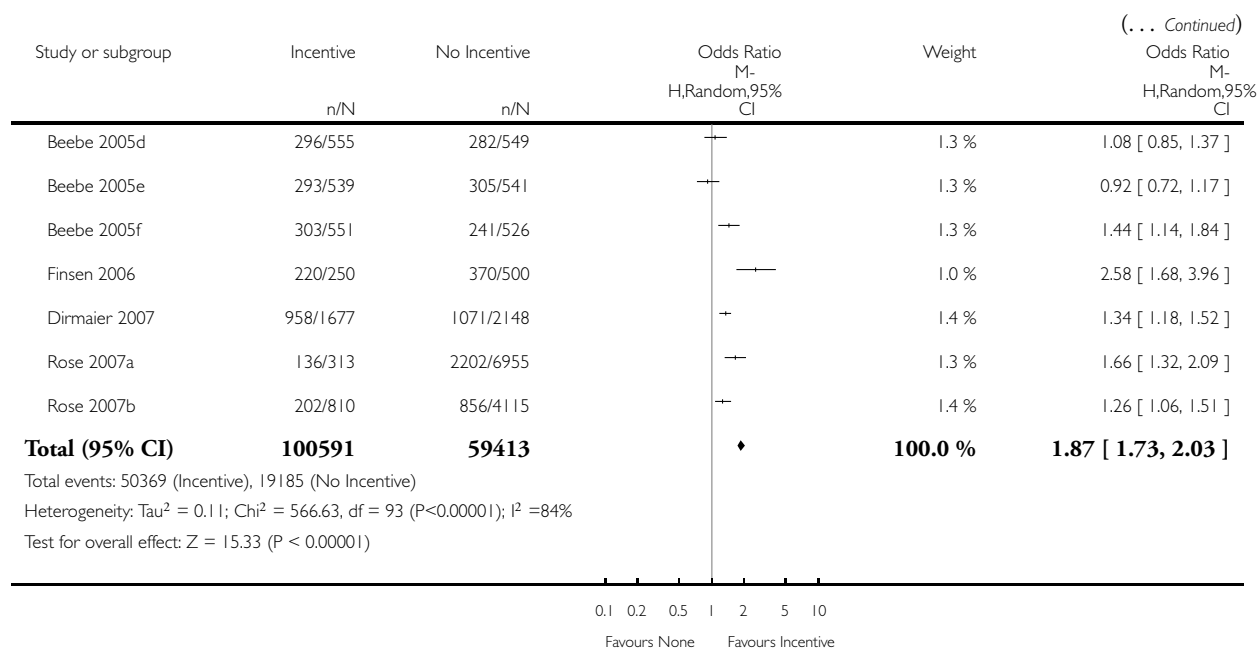
Outcome: 2 Final response



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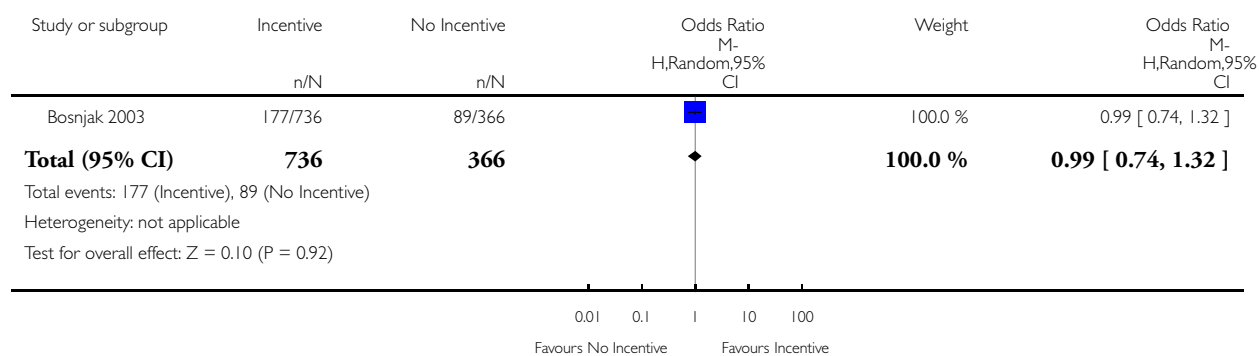


Analysis 1.3. Comparison 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 3 e - Log.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome: 3 e - Log

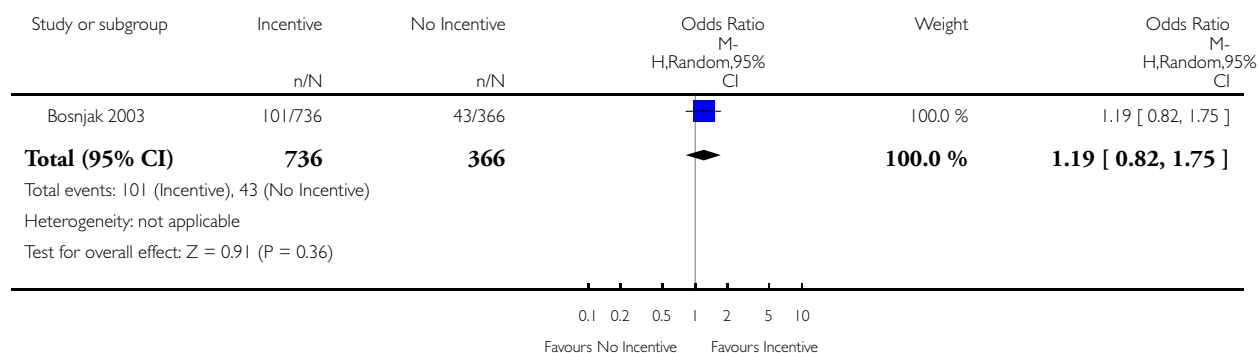


Analysis 1.4. Comparison 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 1 Monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

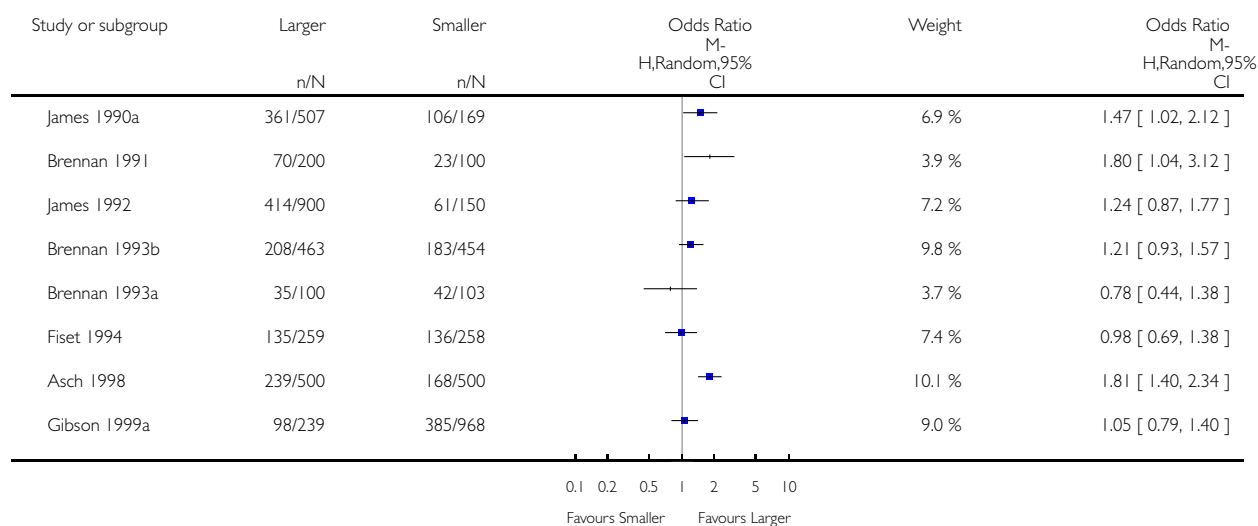


Analysis 2.1. Comparison 2 Larger vs. smaller monetary incentive, Outcome 1 First response.

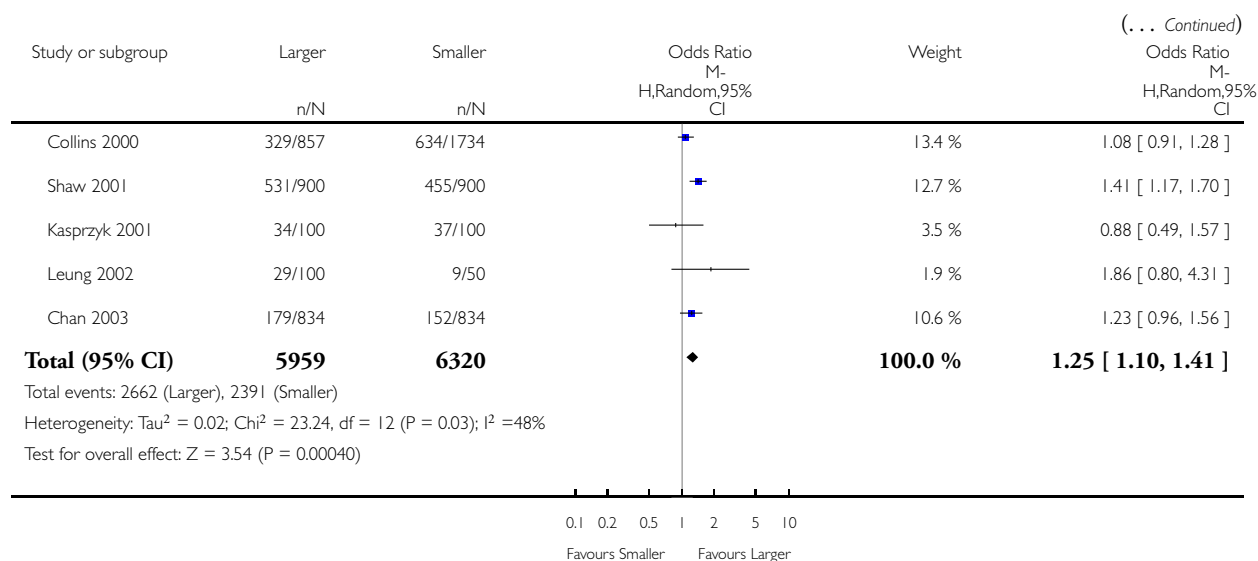
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 2 Larger vs. smaller monetary incentive

Outcome: 1 First response



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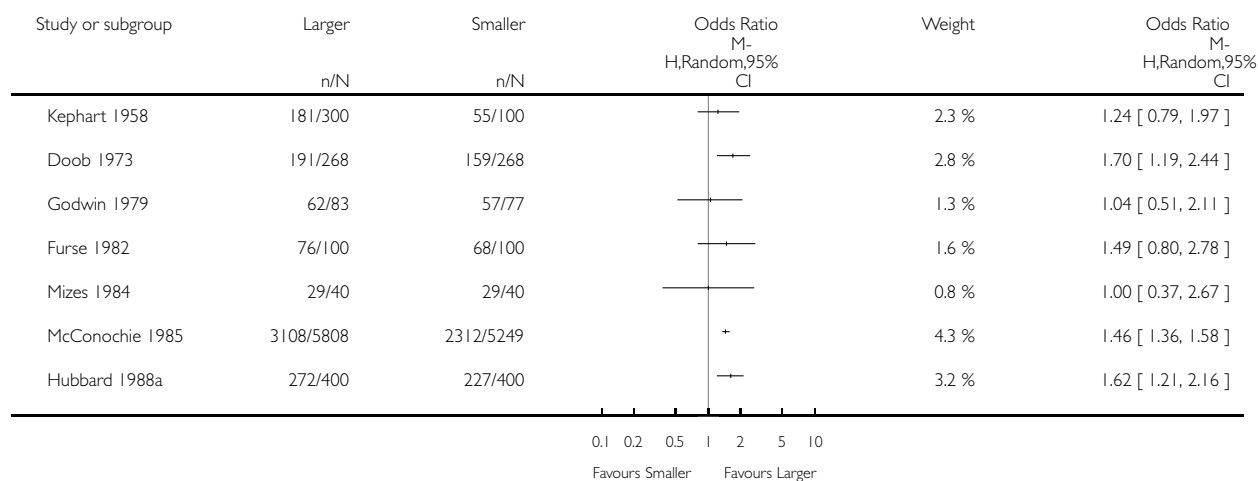


Analysis 2.2. Comparison 2 Larger vs. smaller monetary incentive, Outcome 2 Final response.

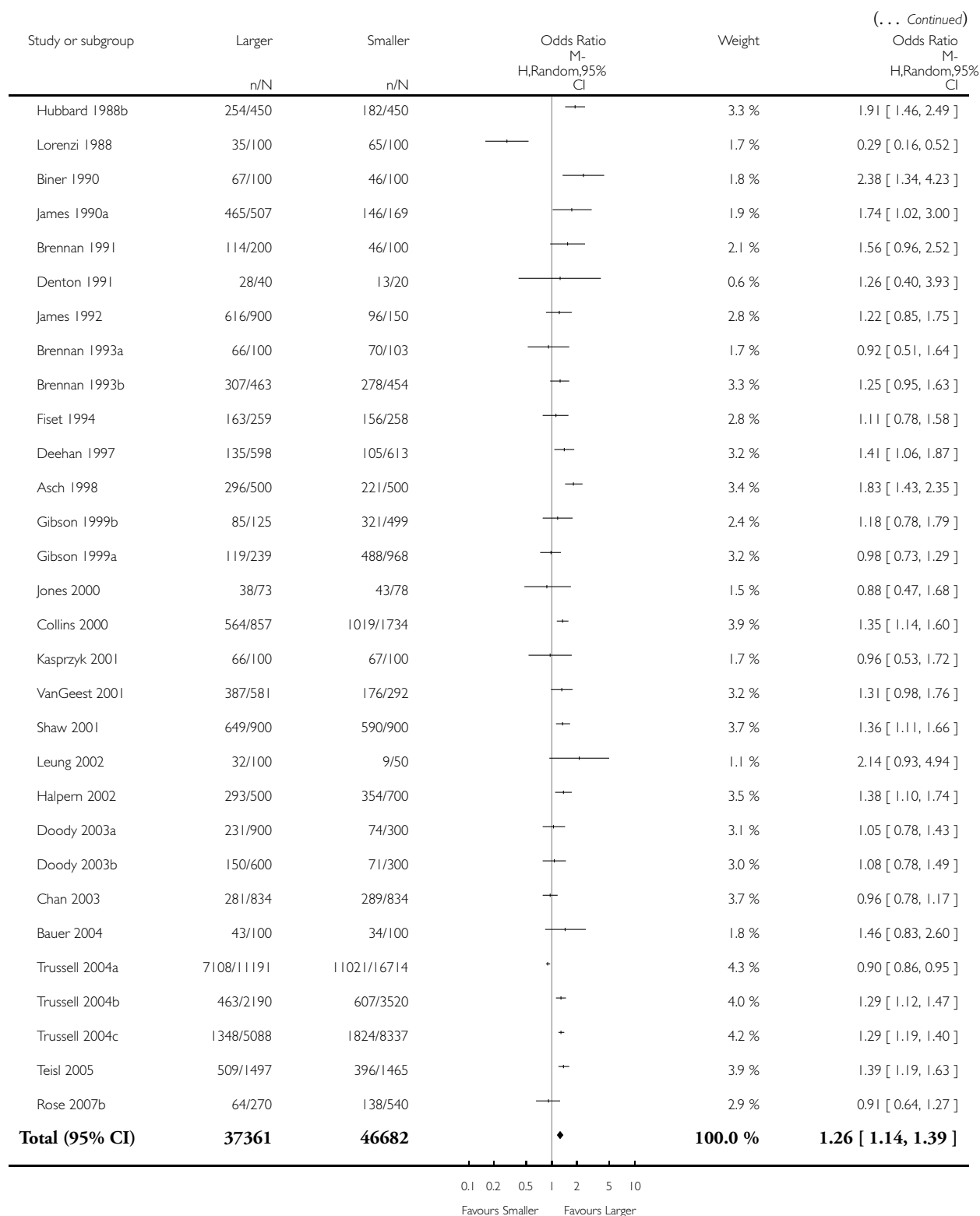
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

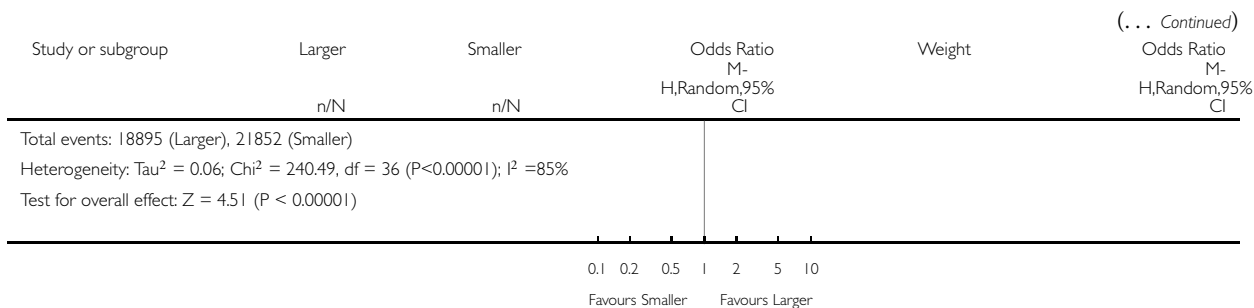
Comparison: 2 Larger vs. smaller monetary incentive

Outcome: 2 Final response



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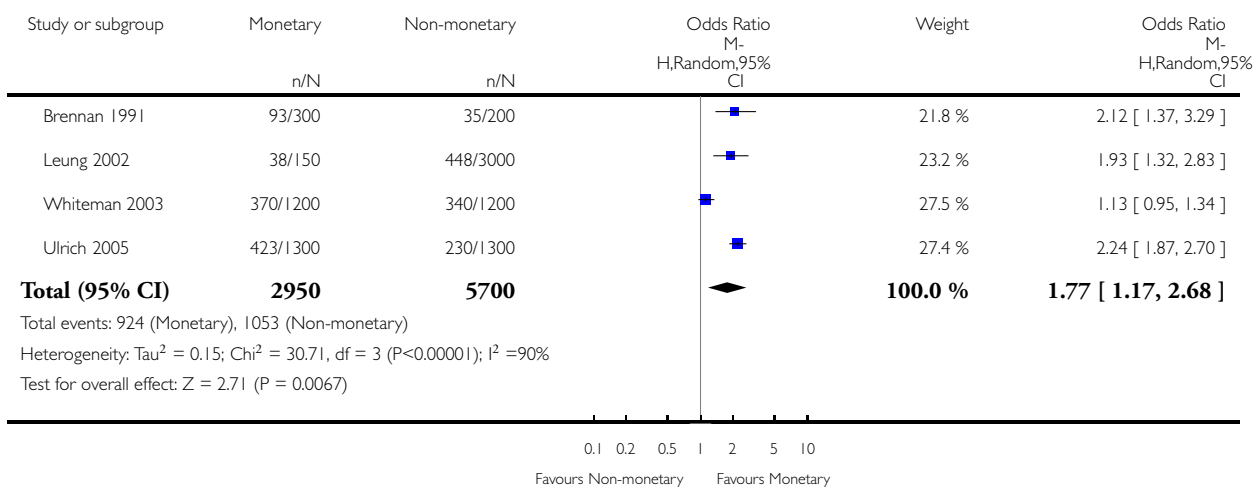


Analysis 3.1. Comparison 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive

Outcome: 1 First response

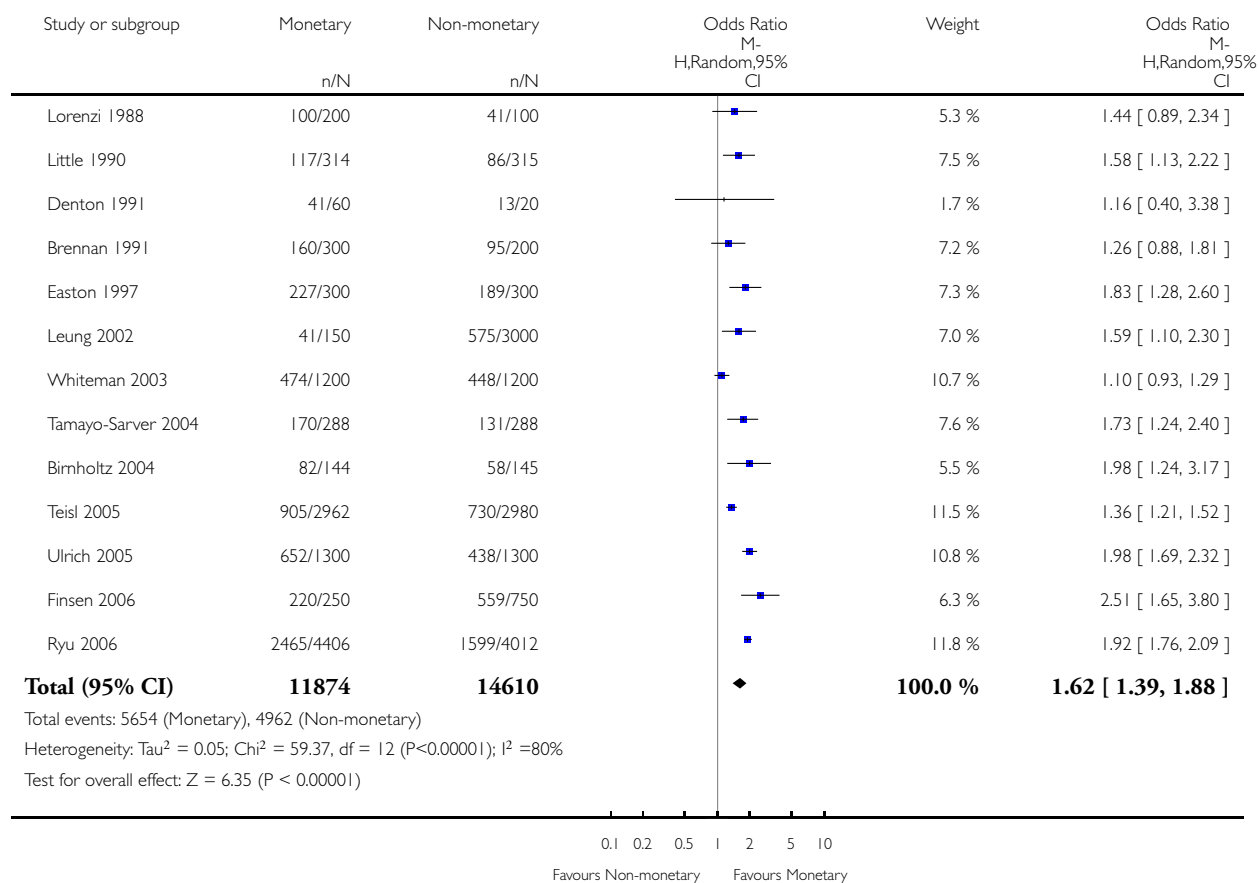


Analysis 3.2. Comparison 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive

Outcome: 2 Final response

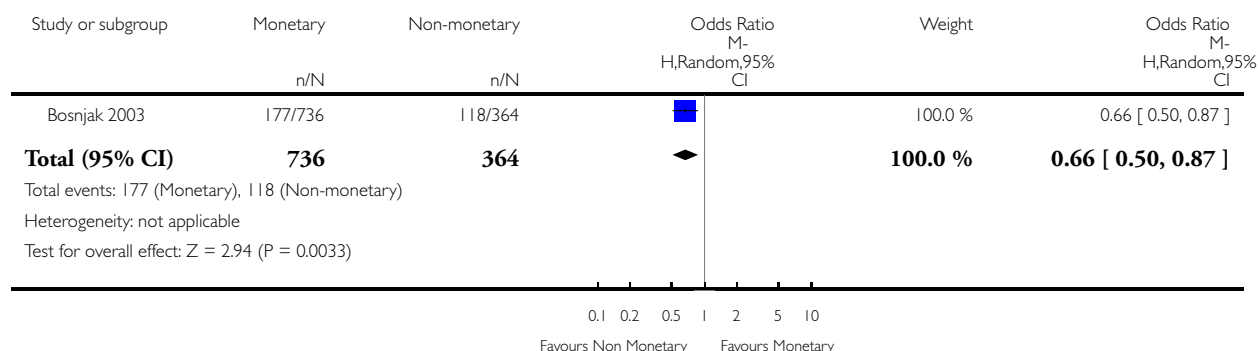


Analysis 3.3. Comparison 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive

Outcome: 3 e - Login

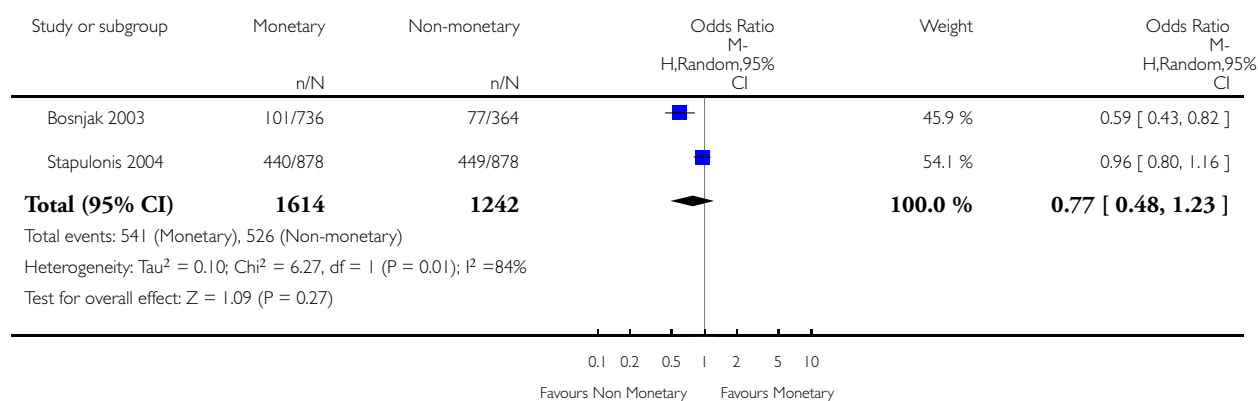


Analysis 3.4. Comparison 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 3 Monetary vs. non-monetary incentive

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

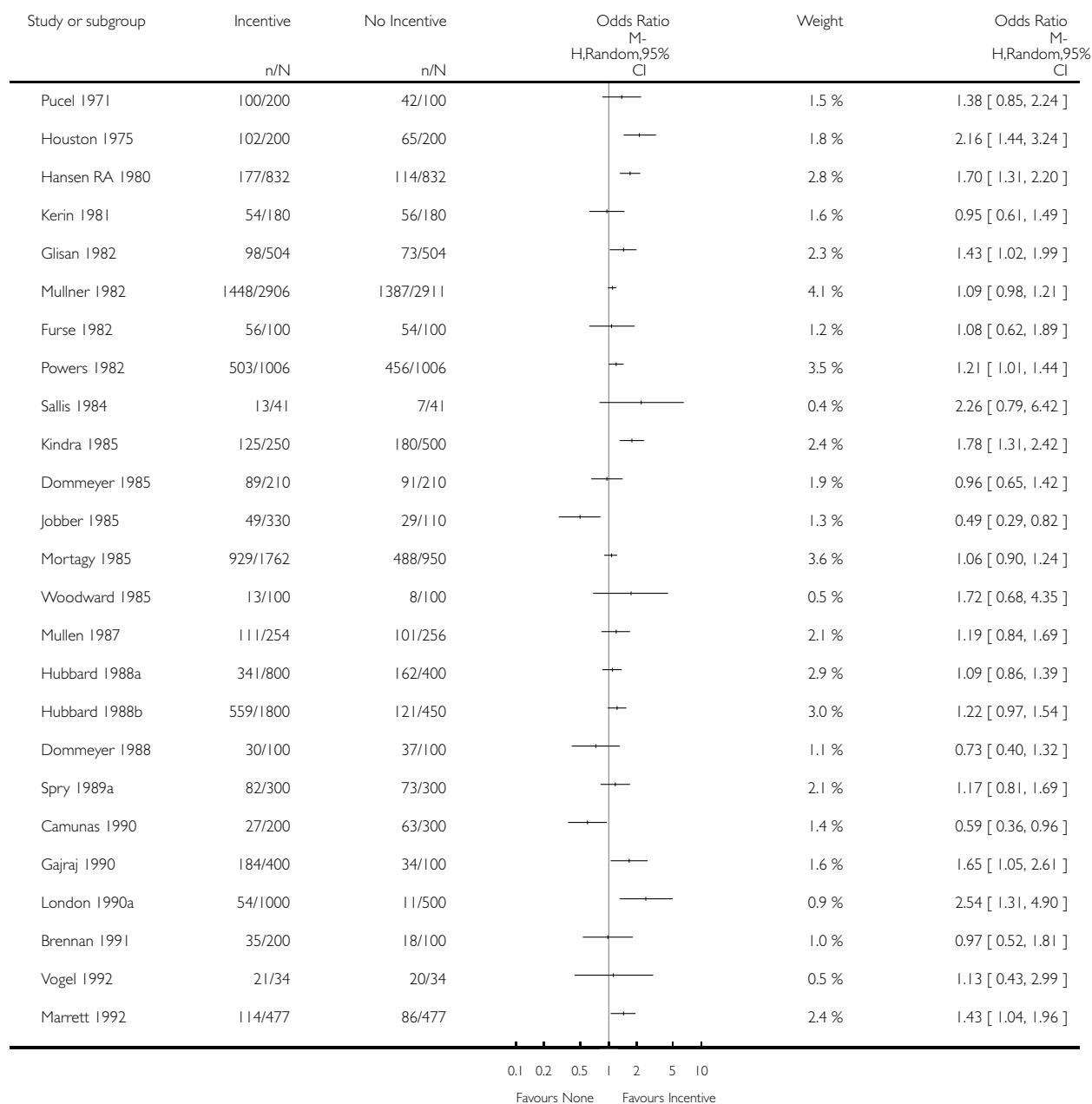


Analysis 4.1. Comparison 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 1 First response.

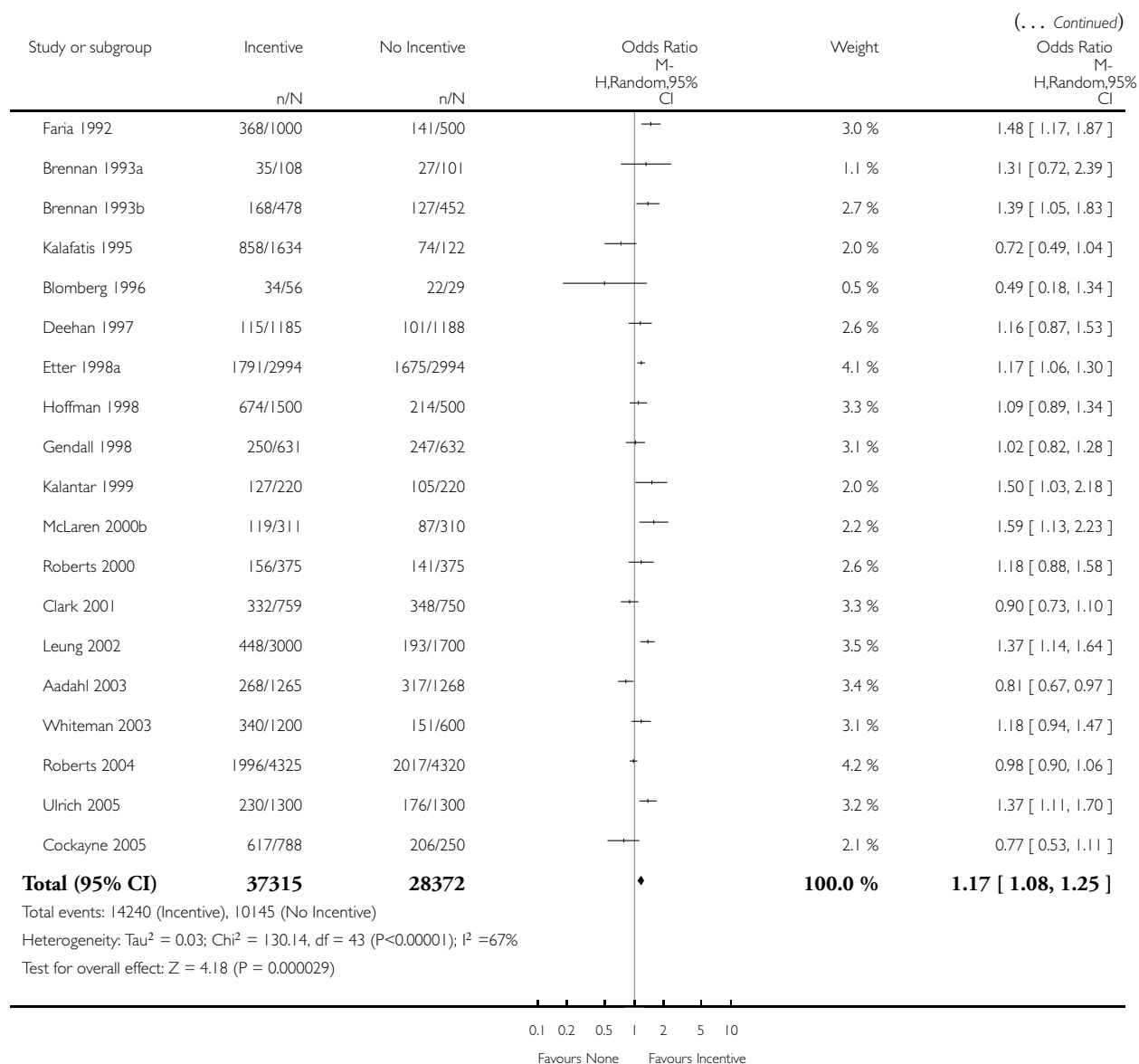
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome: 1 First response



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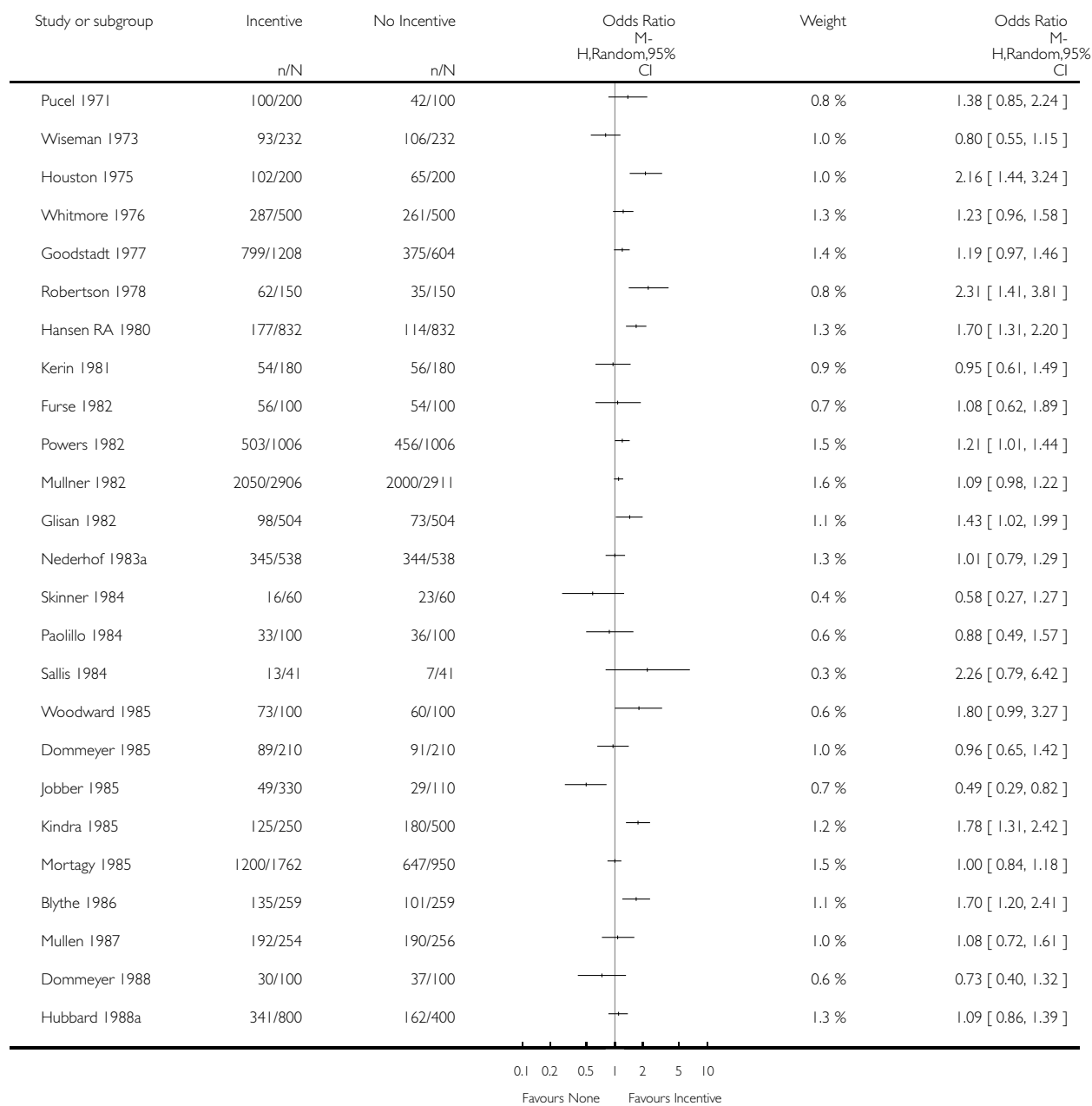


Analysis 4.2. Comparison 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 2 Final response.

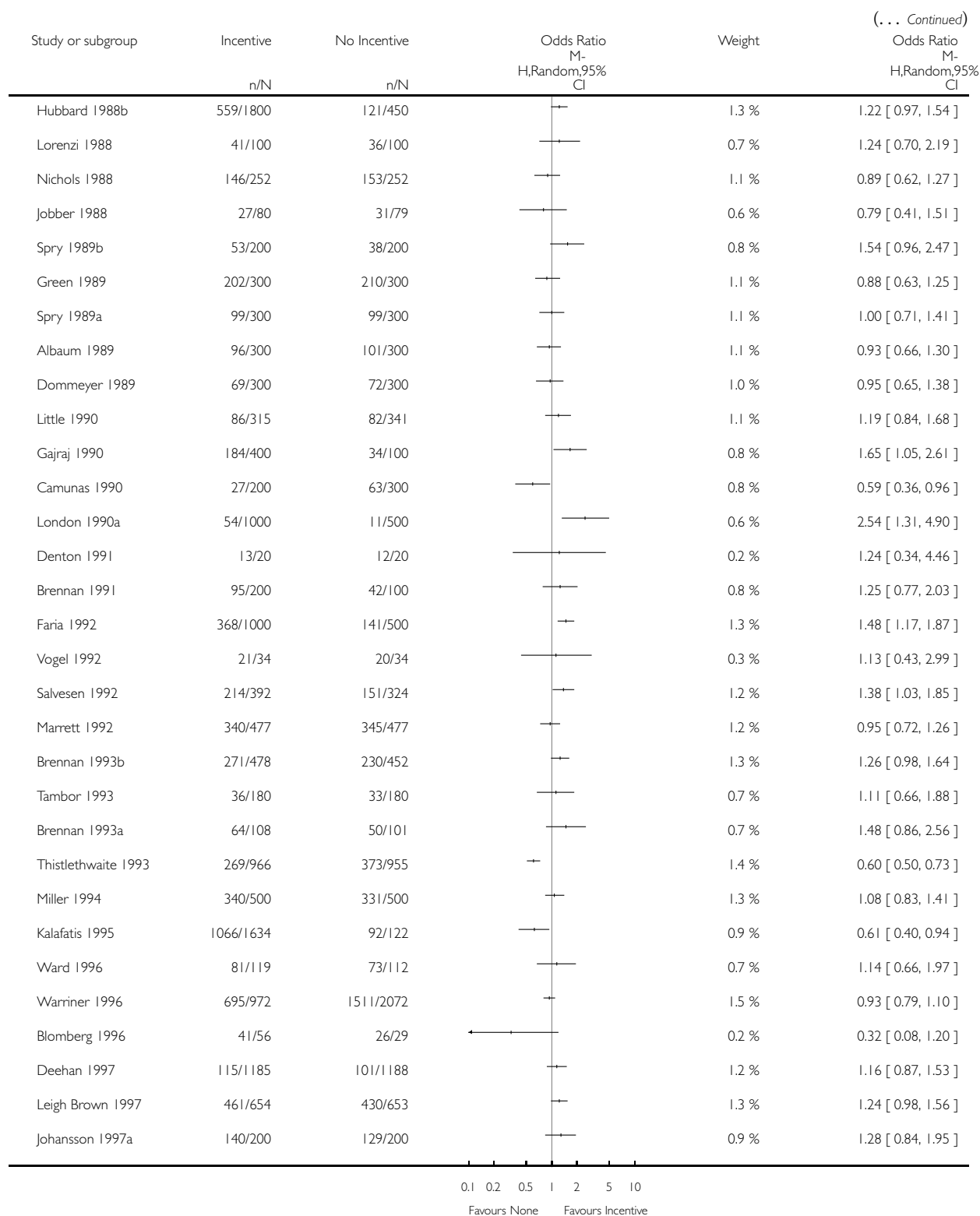
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

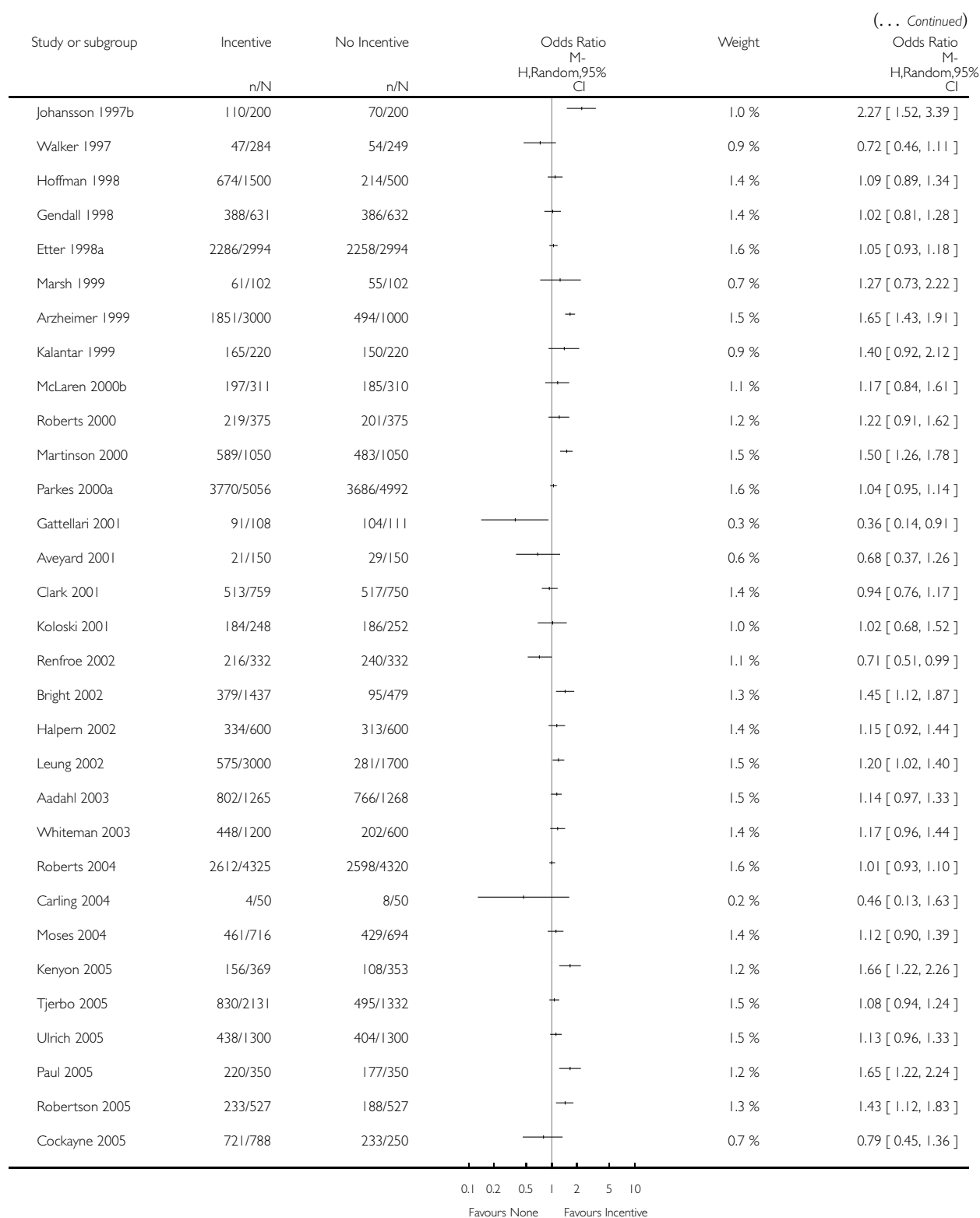
Comparison: 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive

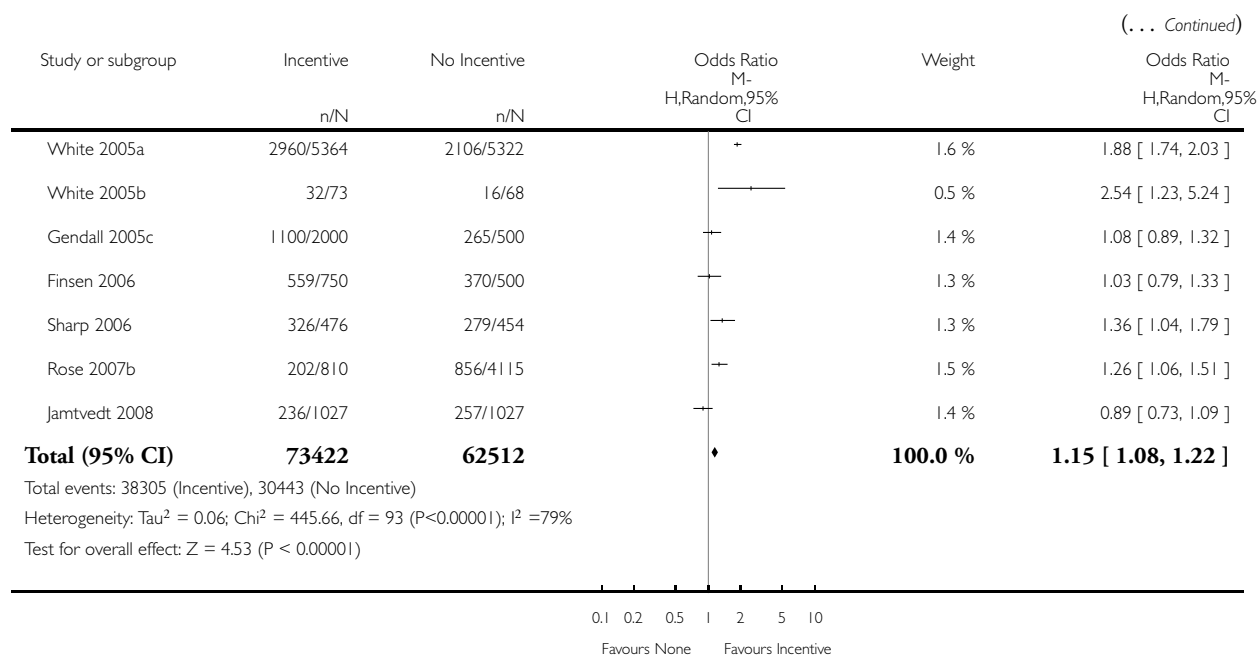
Outcome: 2 Final response



(Continued ...)





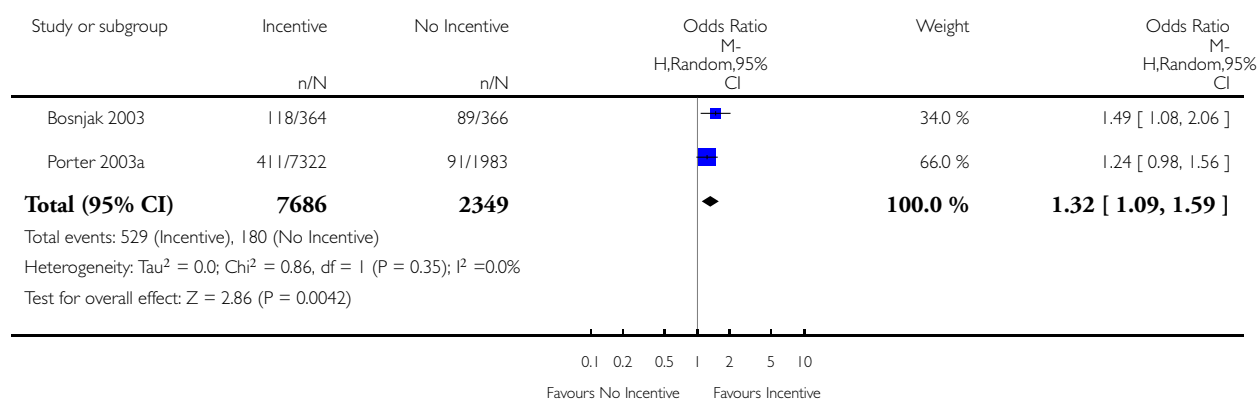


Analysis 4.3. Comparison 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome: 3 e - Login

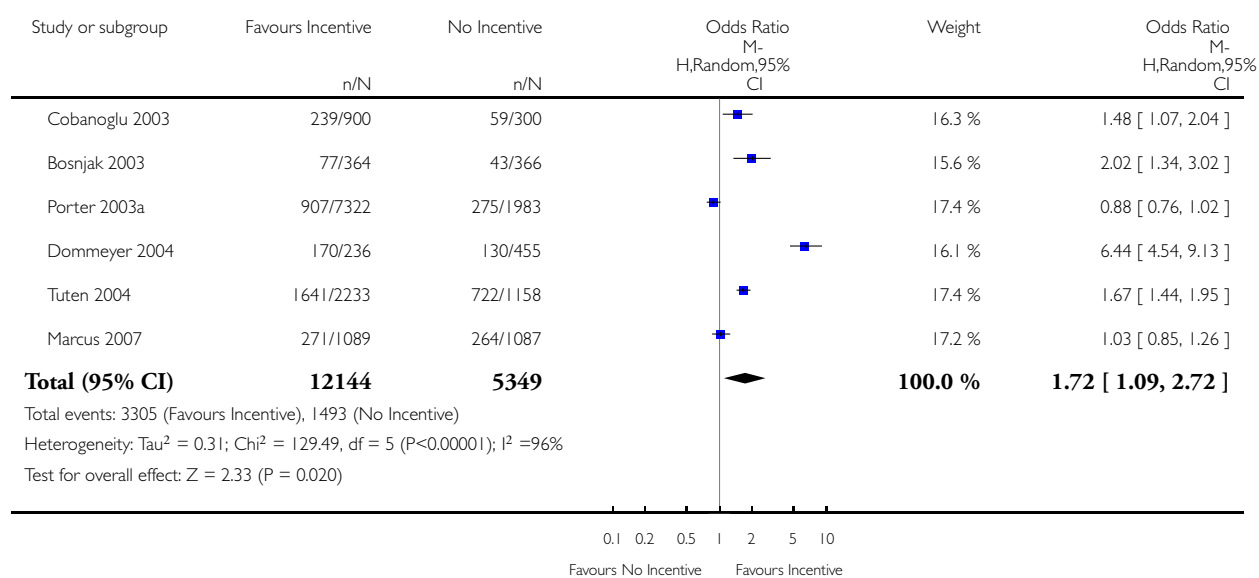


Analysis 4.4. Comparison 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 4 Non-monetary incentive vs. no incentive

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

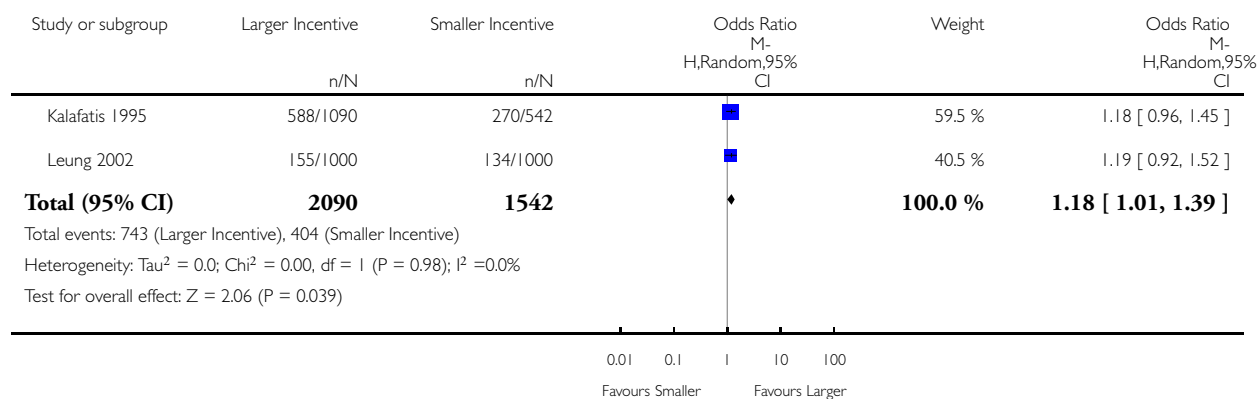


Analysis 5.1. Comparison 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller

Outcome: 1 First response

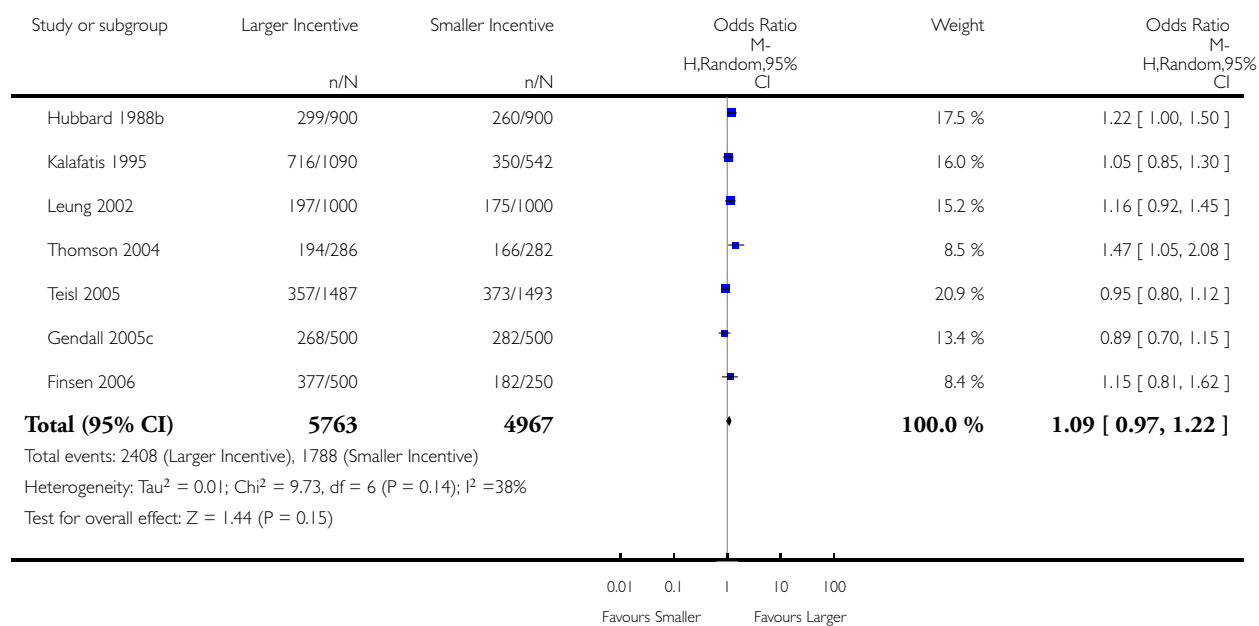


Analysis 5.2. Comparison 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller

Outcome: 2 Final response

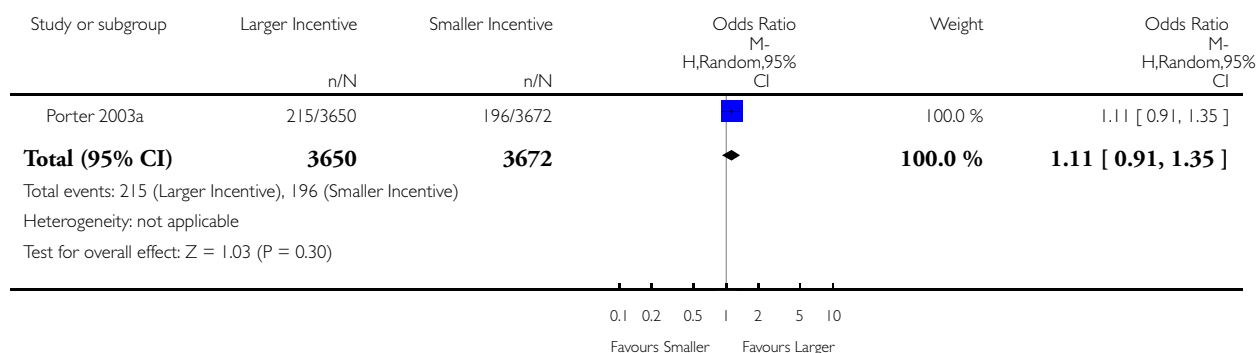


Analysis 5.3. Comparison 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller

Outcome: 3 e - Login

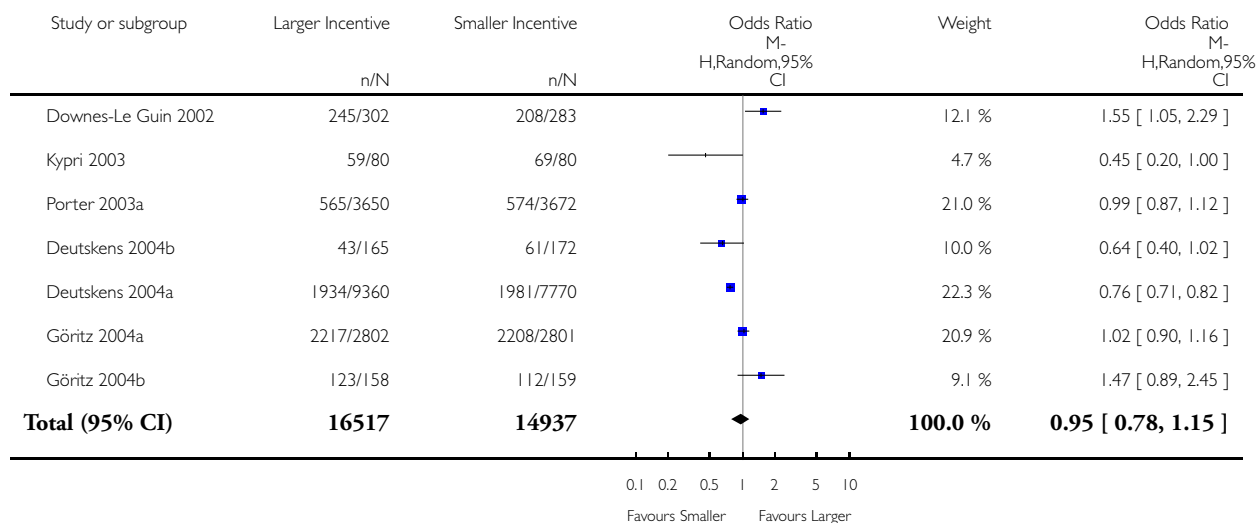


Analysis 5.4. Comparison 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

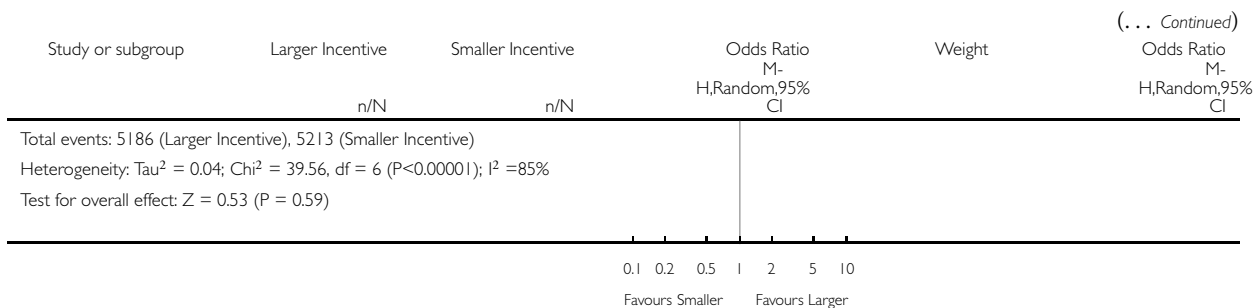
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 5 Larger non-monetary incentive vs. smaller

Outcome: 4 e - Submission



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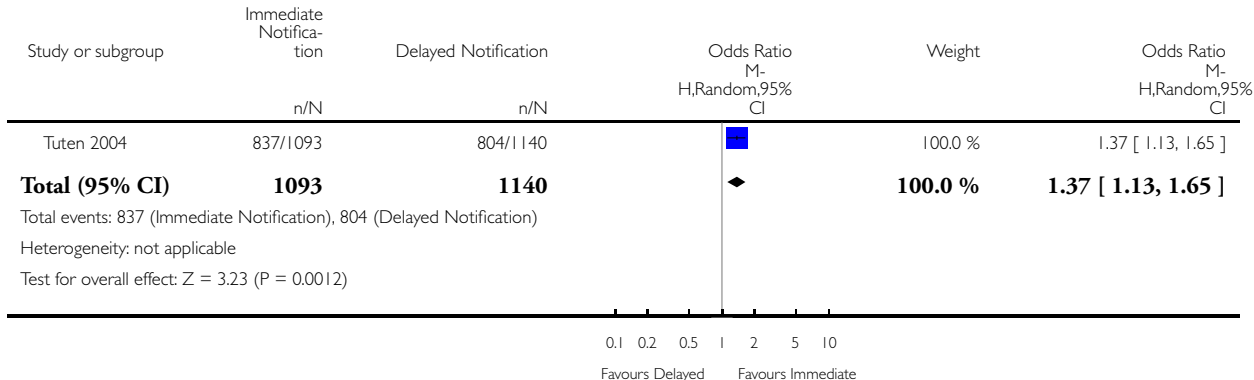


Analysis 6.4. Comparison 6 Immediate notification of lottery results vs. delayed notification, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 6 Immediate notification of lottery results vs. delayed notification

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

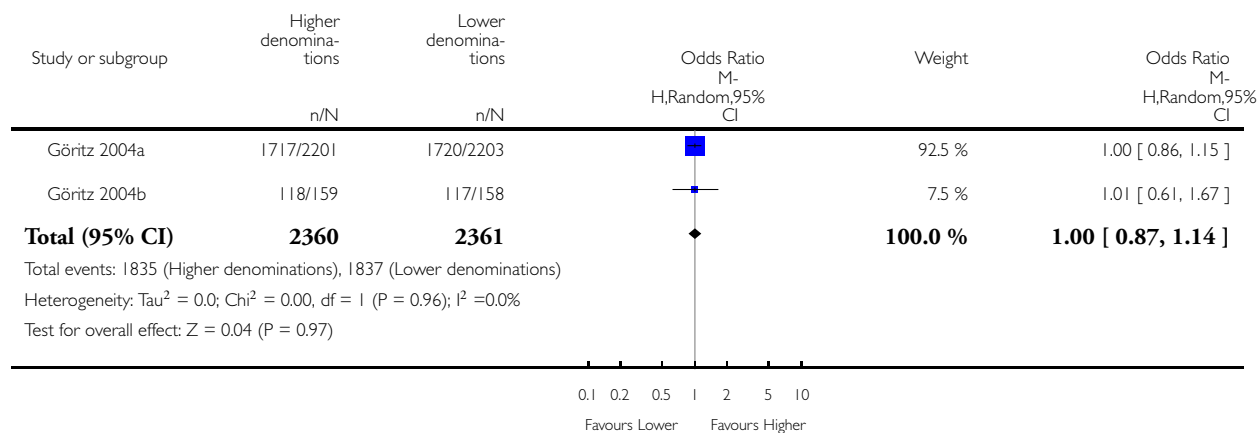


Analysis 7.4. Comparison 7 Higher denominations in monetary lottery incentives vs. lower, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 7 Higher denominations in monetary lottery incentives vs. lower

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

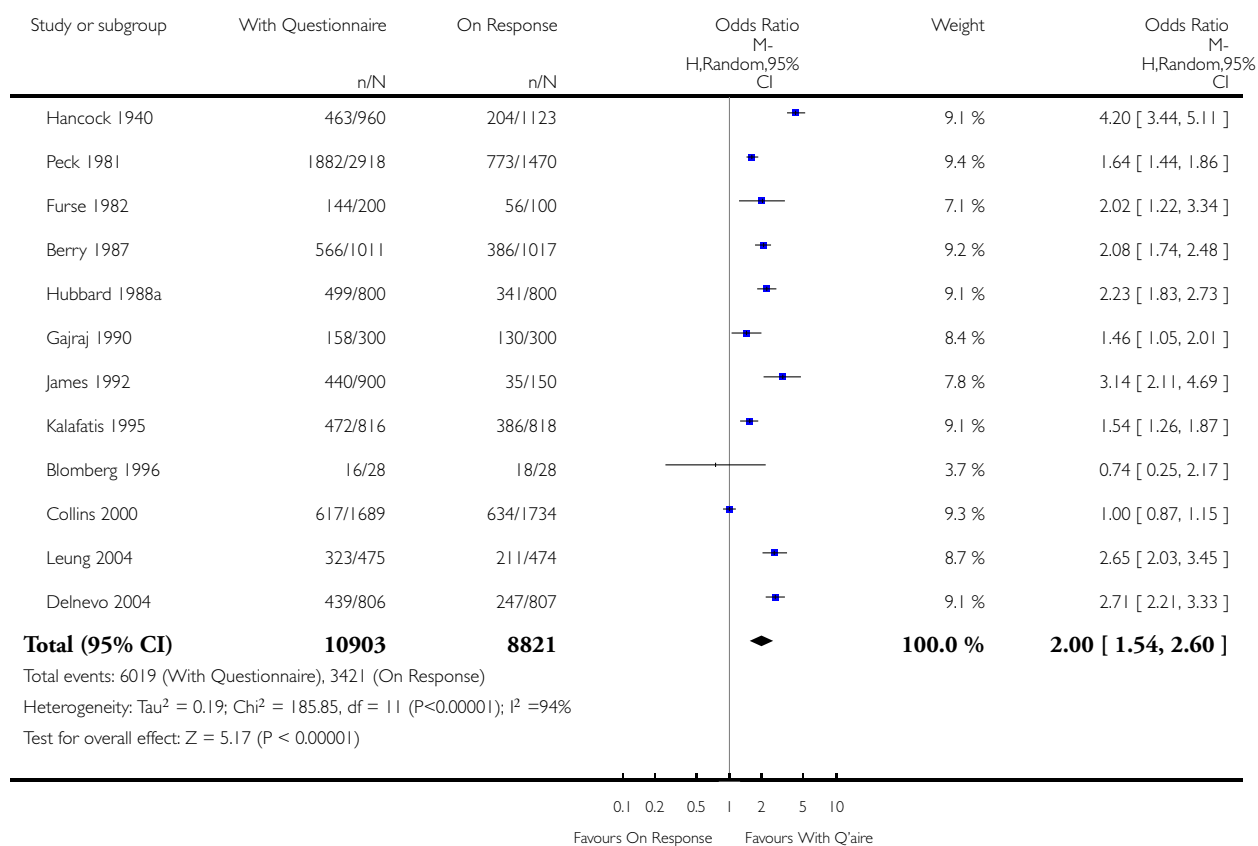


Analysis 8.1. Comparison 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response

Outcome: 1 First response

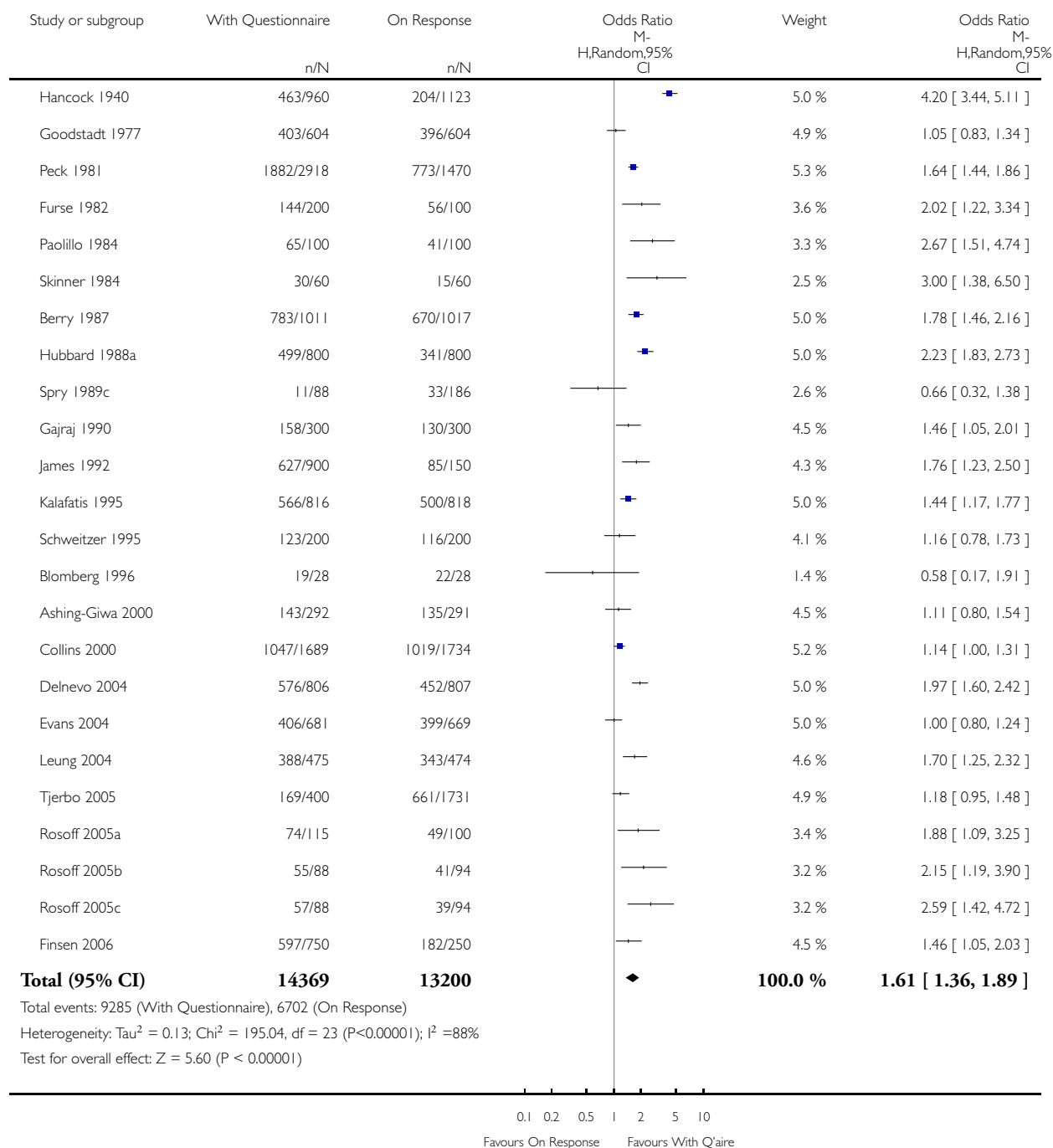


Analysis 8.2. Comparison 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response

Outcome: 2 Final response

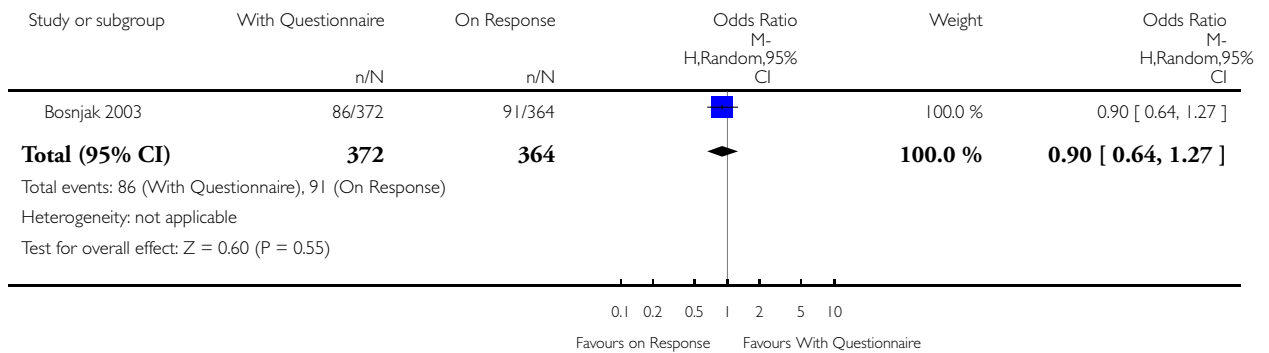


Analysis 8.3. Comparison 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response, Outcome 3 e - Log.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response

Outcome: 3 e - Log

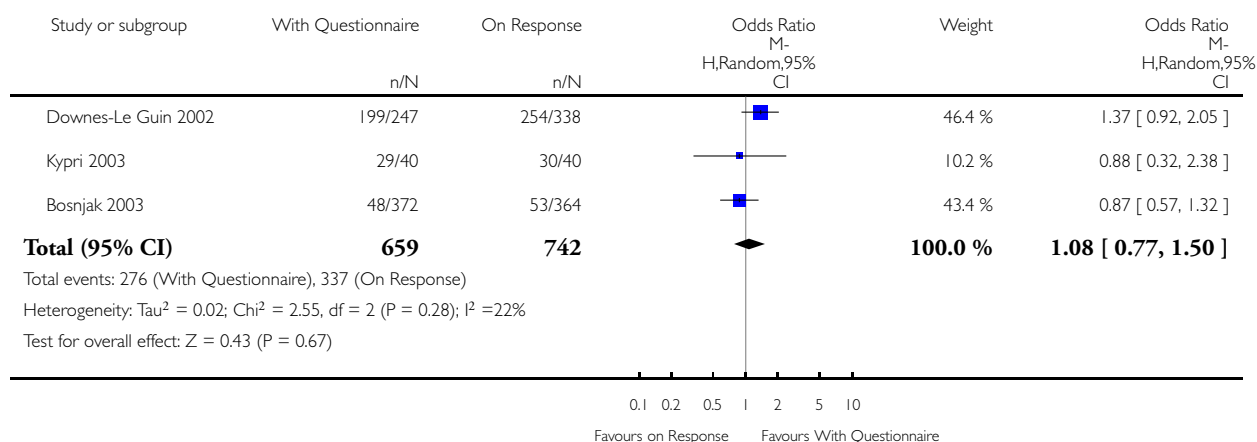


Analysis 8.4. Comparison 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 8 Incentive with questionnaire vs. on response

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

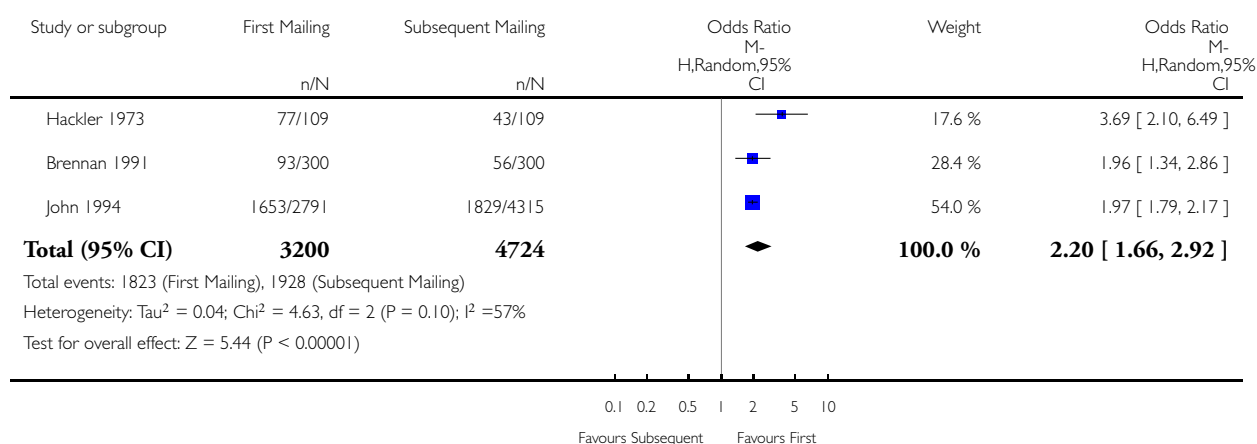


Analysis 9.1. Comparison 9 Incentive with first vs. subsequent mailing, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 9 Incentive with first vs. subsequent mailing

Outcome: 1 First response

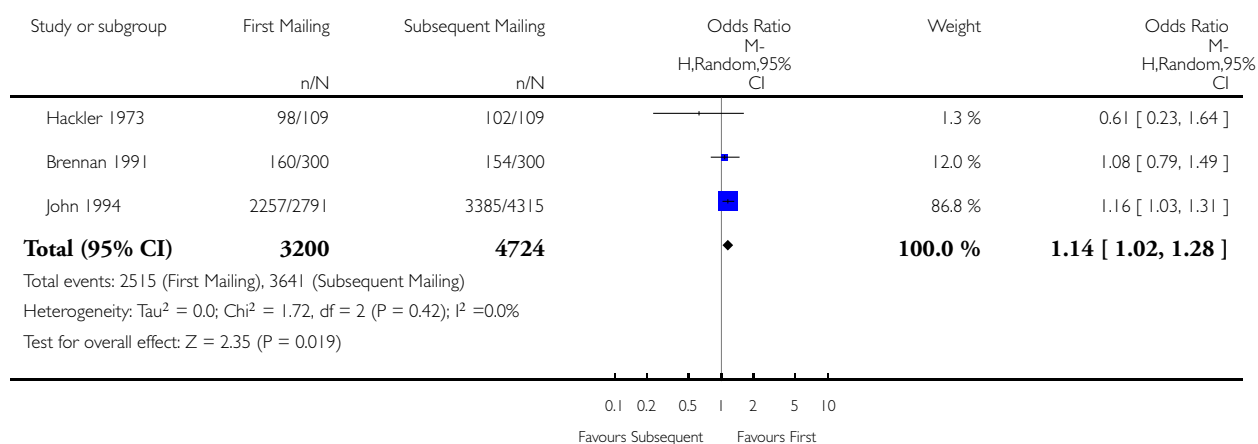


Analysis 9.2. Comparison 9 Incentive with first vs. subsequent mailing, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 9 Incentive with first vs. subsequent mailing

Outcome: 2 Final response

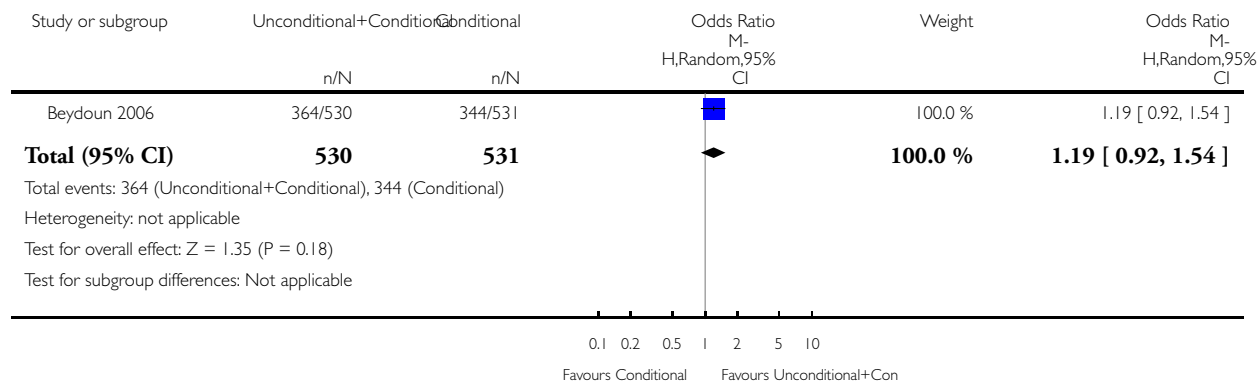


Analysis 10.4. Comparison 10 Unconditional and conditional incentives vs. conditional incentives, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 10 Unconditional and conditional incentives vs. conditional incentives

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

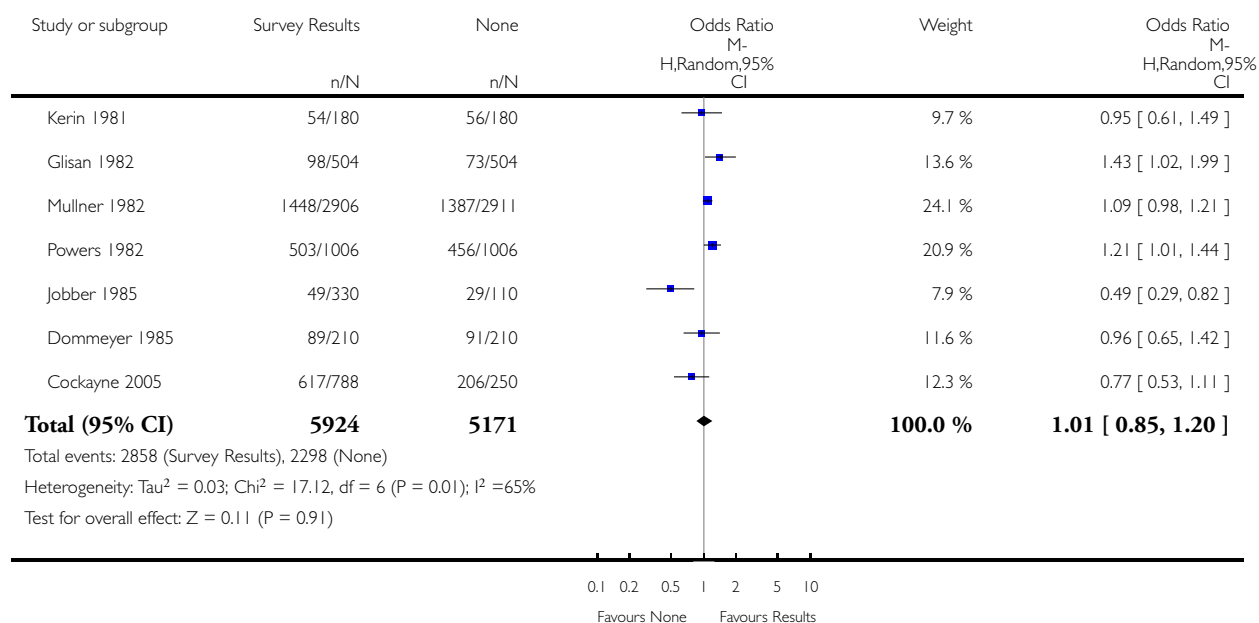


Analysis 11.1. Comparison 11 Offer of survey results vs. no offer, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 11 Offer of survey results vs. no offer

Outcome: 1 First response

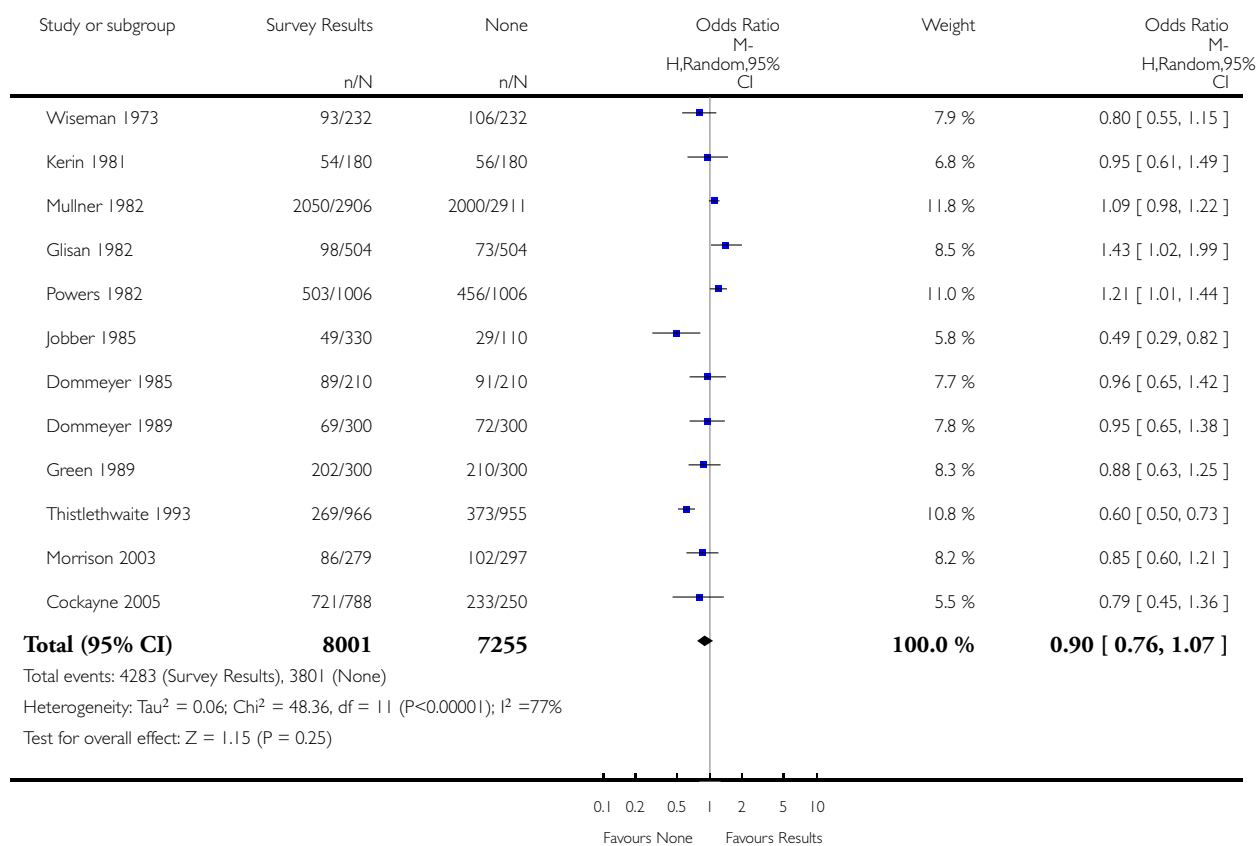


Analysis 11.2. Comparison 11 Offer of survey results vs. no offer, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 11 Offer of survey results vs. no offer

Outcome: 2 Final response

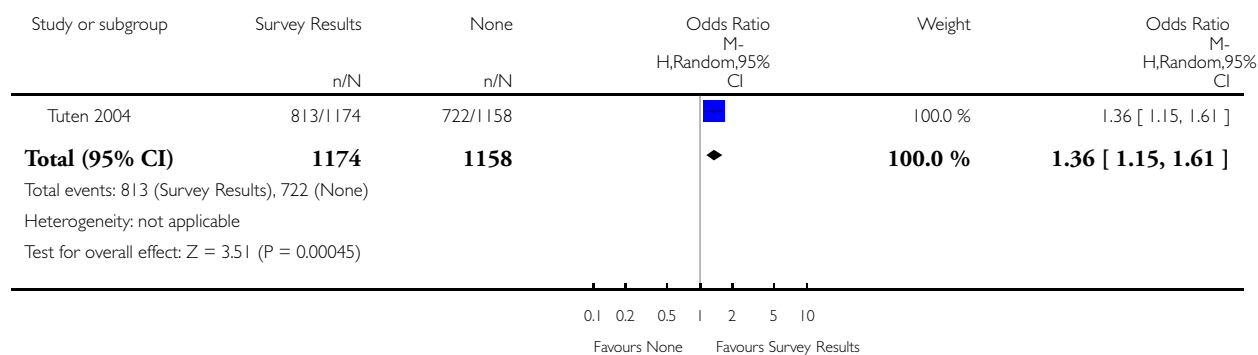


Analysis 11.4. Comparison 11 Offer of survey results vs. no offer, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 11 Offer of survey results vs. no offer

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

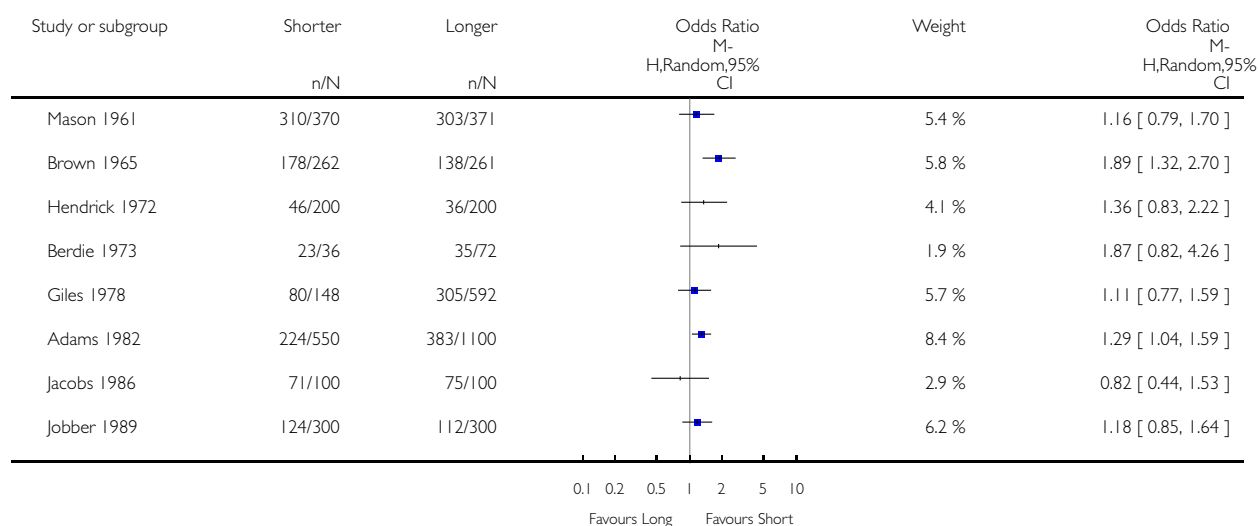


Analysis 12.1. Comparison 12 Shorter vs. longer questionnaire, Outcome 1 First response.

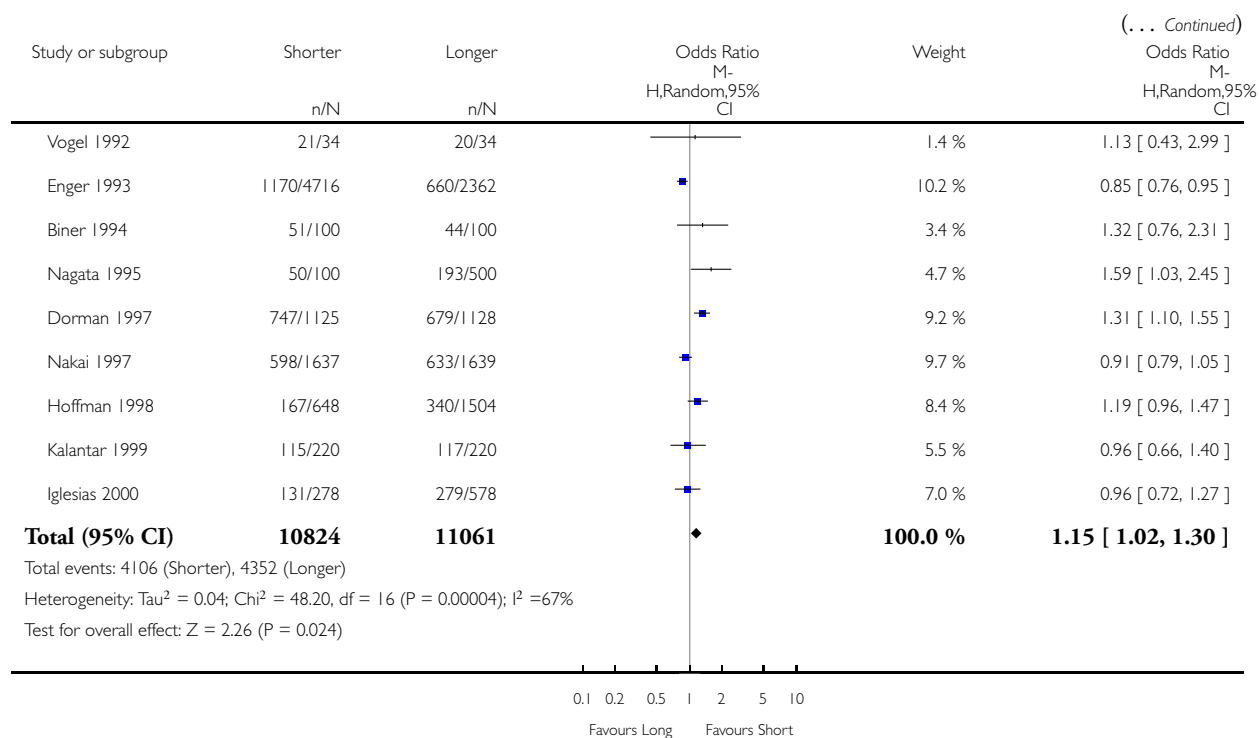
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 12 Shorter vs. longer questionnaire

Outcome: 1 First response



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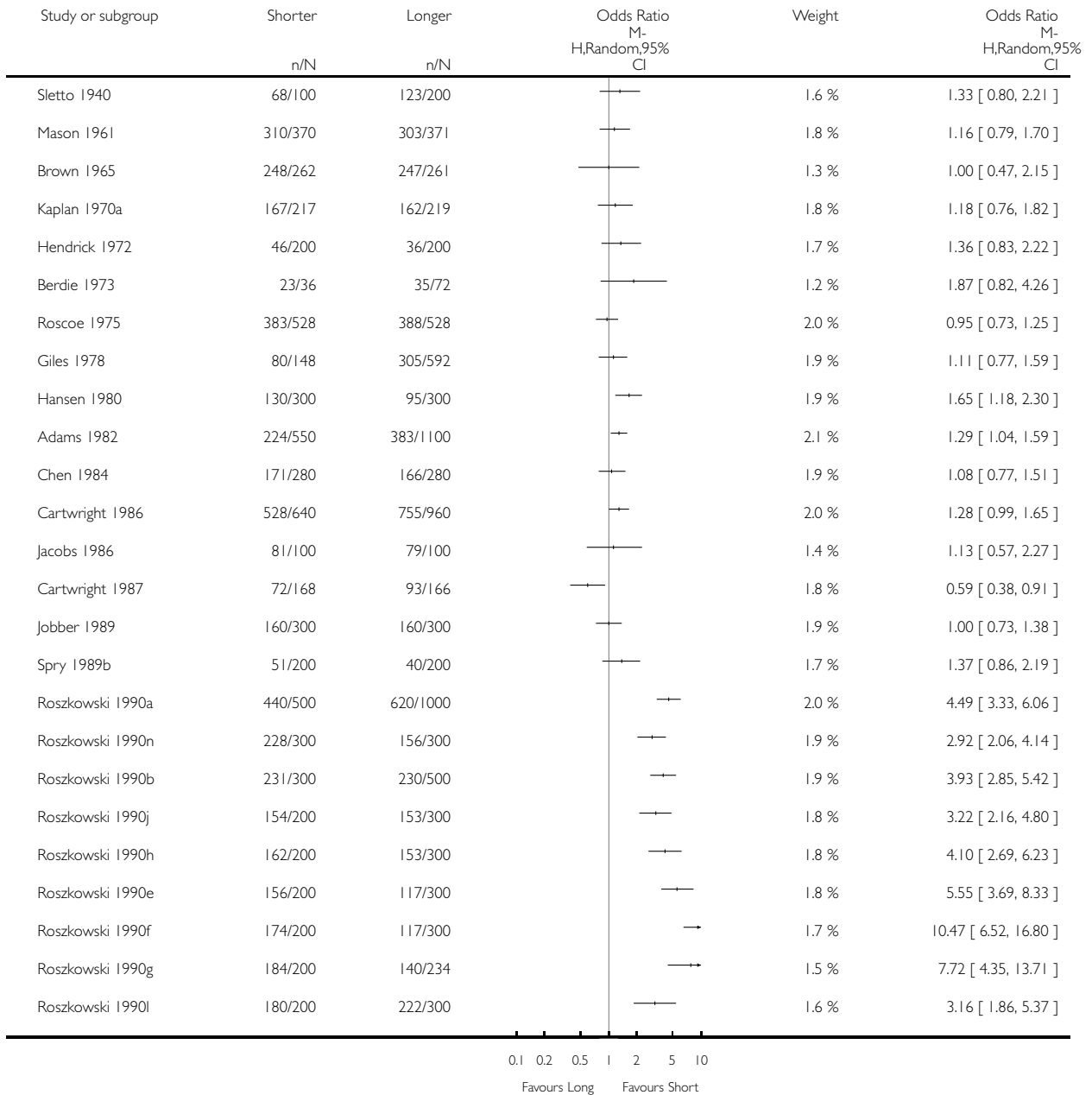


Analysis 12.2. Comparison 12 Shorter vs. longer questionnaire, Outcome 2 Final response.

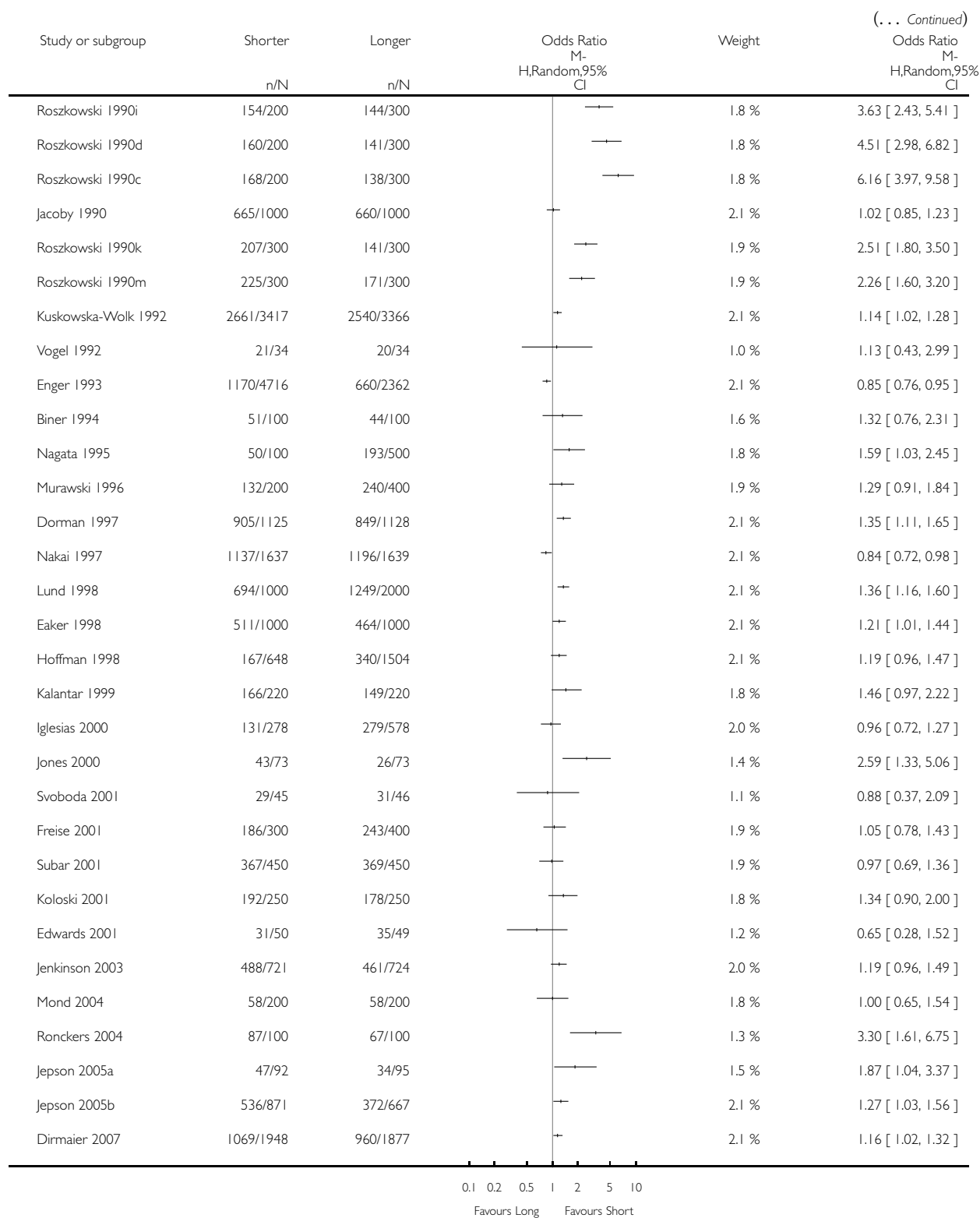
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

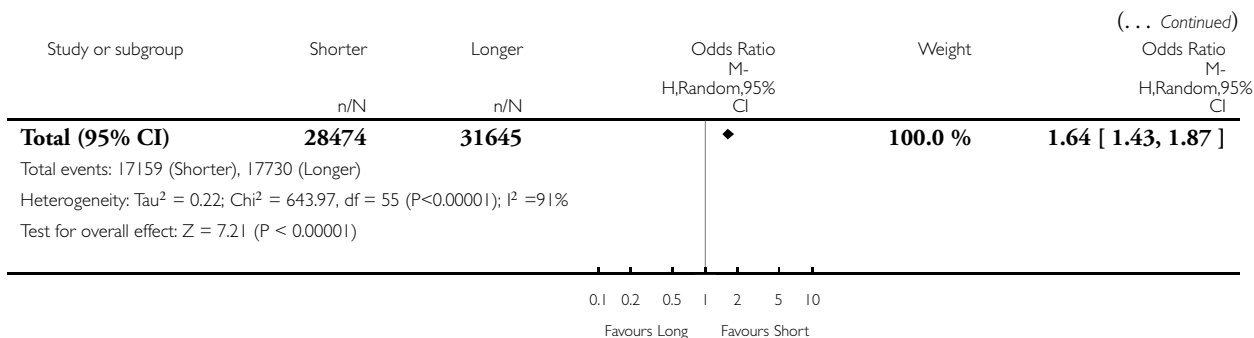
Comparison: 12 Shorter vs. longer questionnaire

Outcome: 2 Final response



(Continued ...)



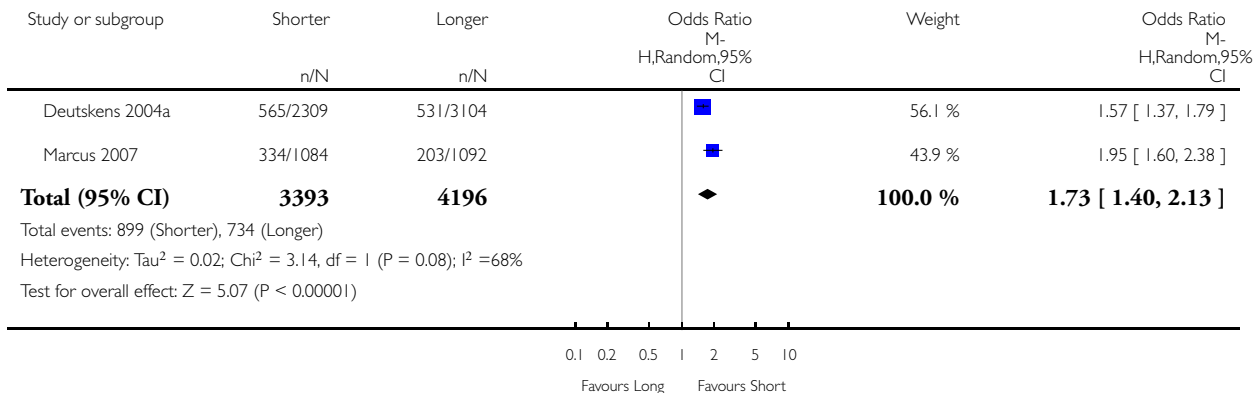


Analysis 12.4. Comparison 12 Shorter vs. longer questionnaire, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 12 Shorter vs. longer questionnaire

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

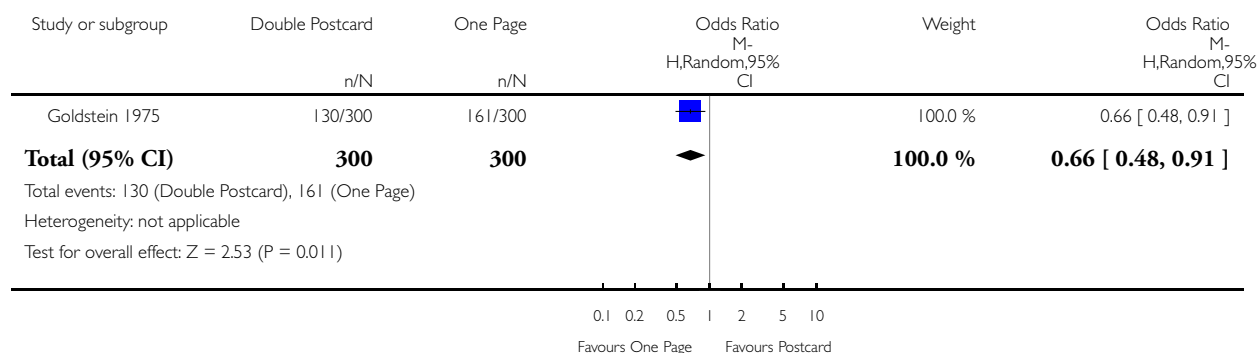


Analysis 13.1. Comparison 13 Double postcard vs. one page, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 13 Double postcard vs. one page

Outcome: 1 First response

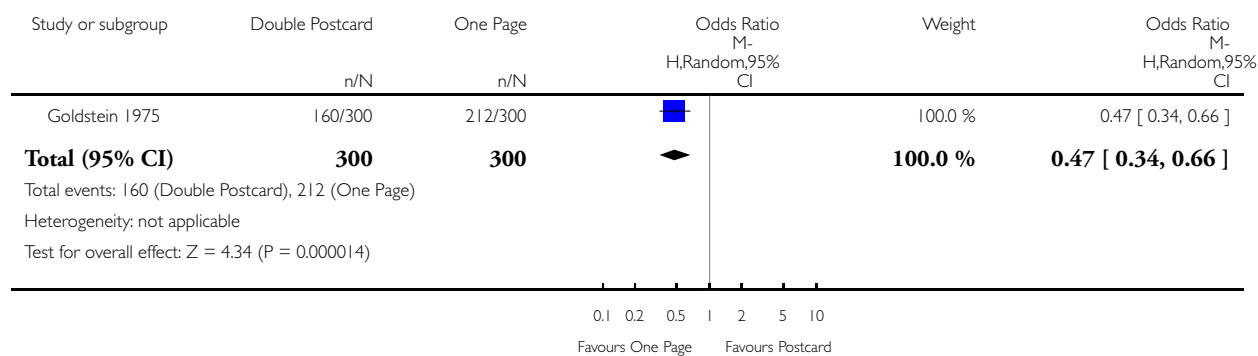


Analysis 13.2. Comparison 13 Double postcard vs. one page, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 13 Double postcard vs. one page

Outcome: 2 Final response

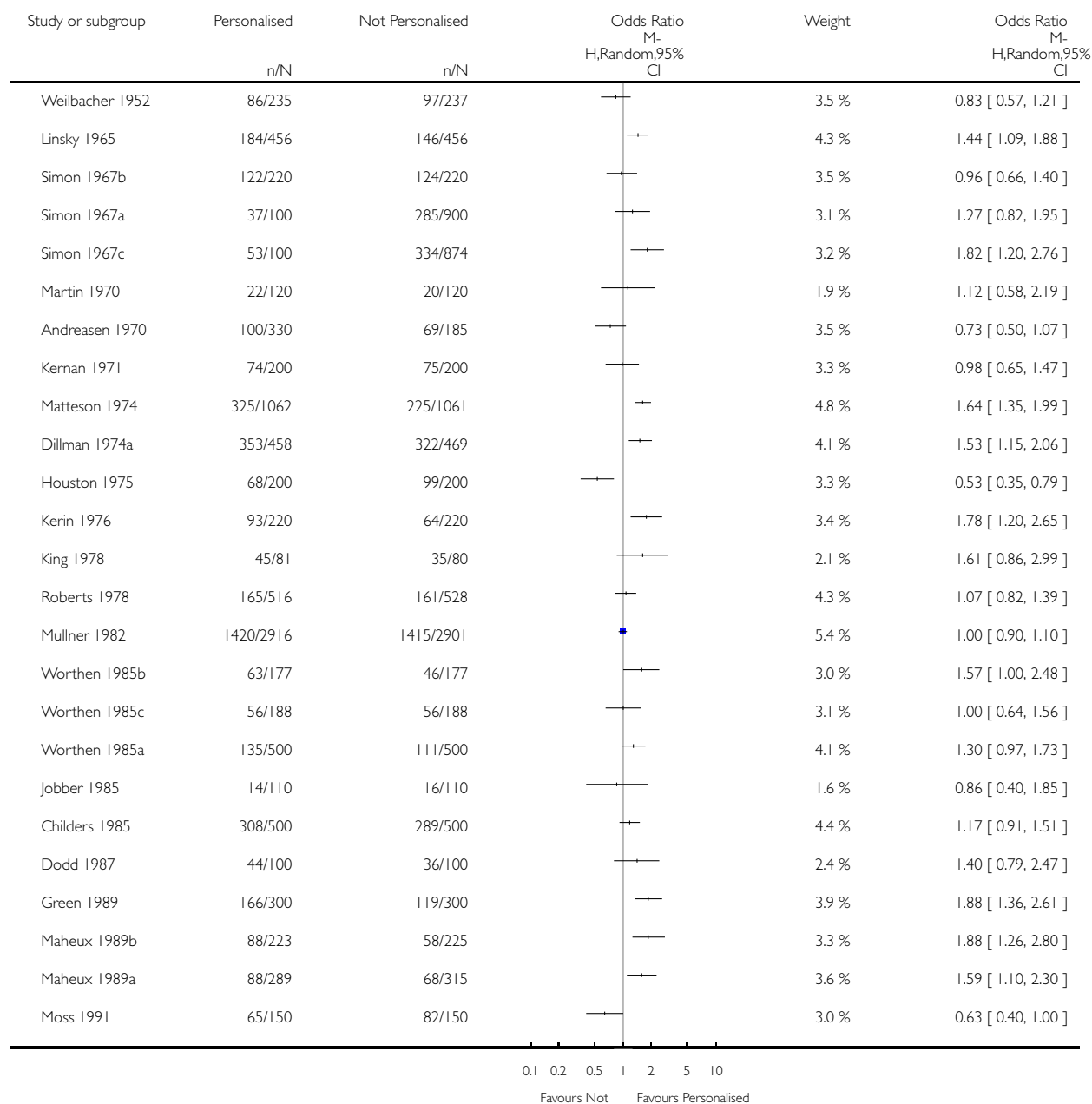


Analysis 14.1. Comparison 14 More vs. less personalised, Outcome 1 First response.

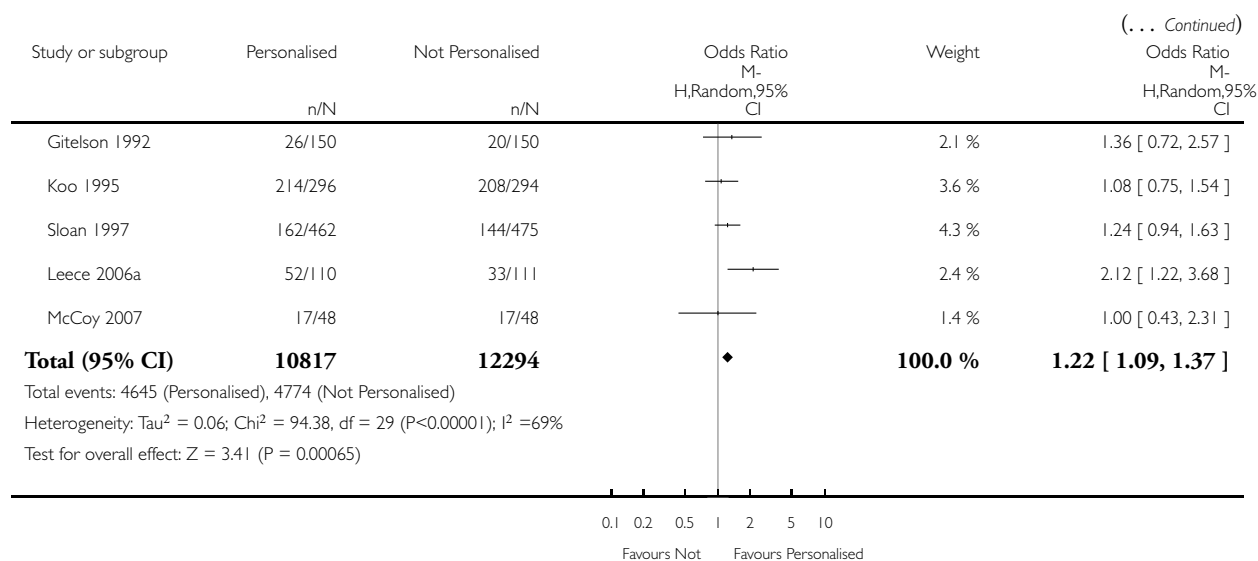
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 14 More vs. less personalised

Outcome: 1 First response



(Continued ...)

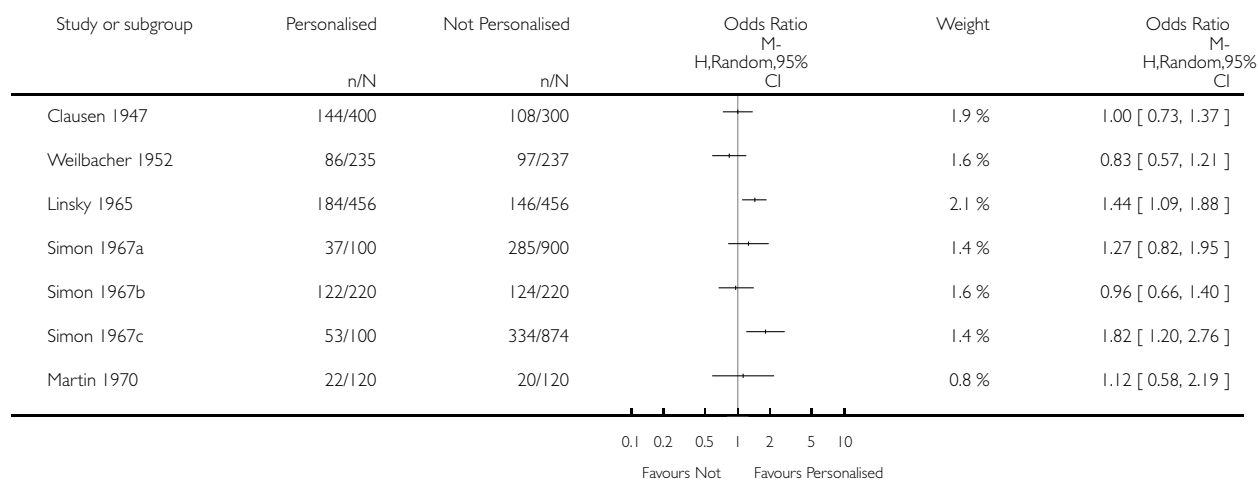


Analysis 14.2. Comparison 14 More vs. less personalised, Outcome 2 Final response.

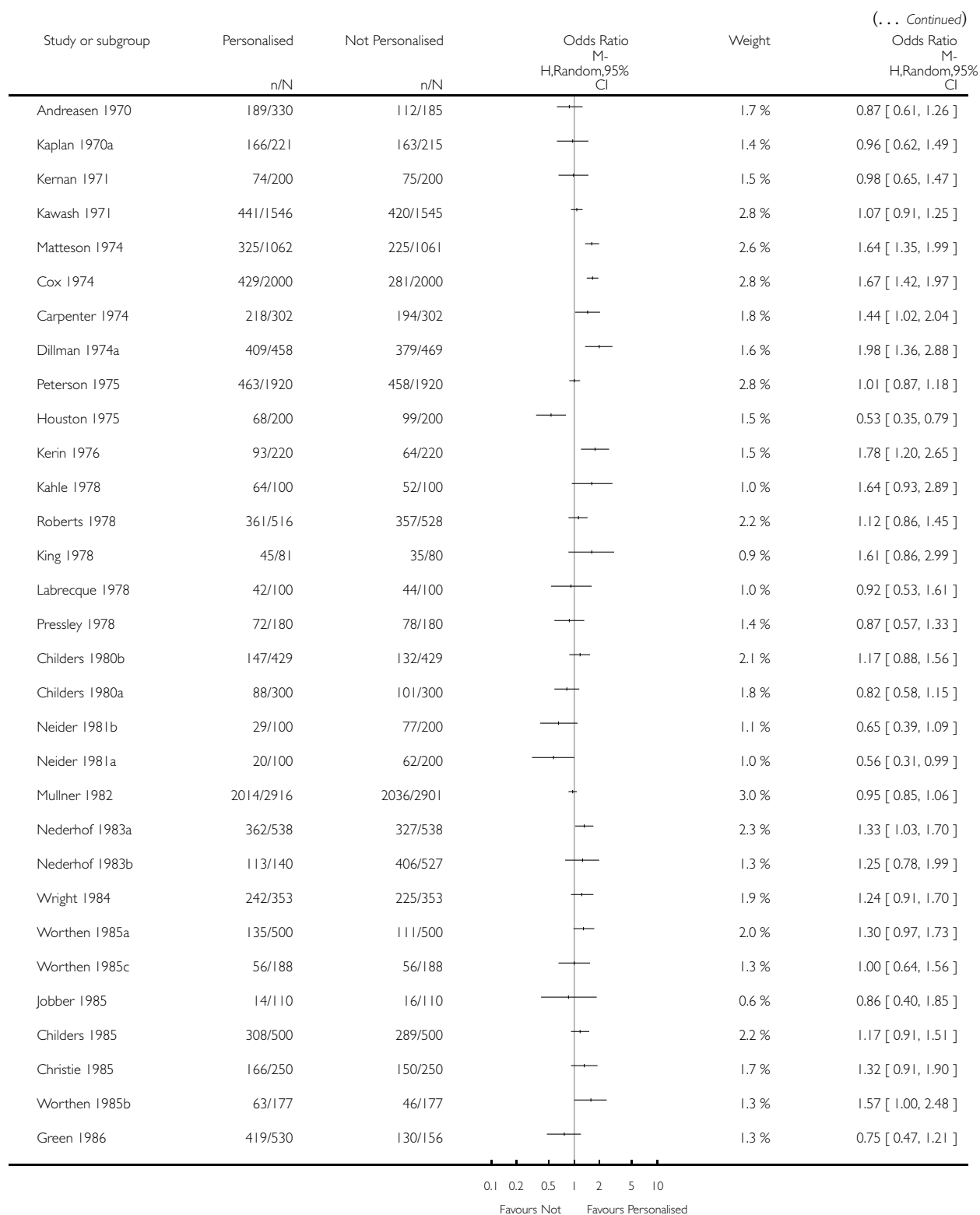
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

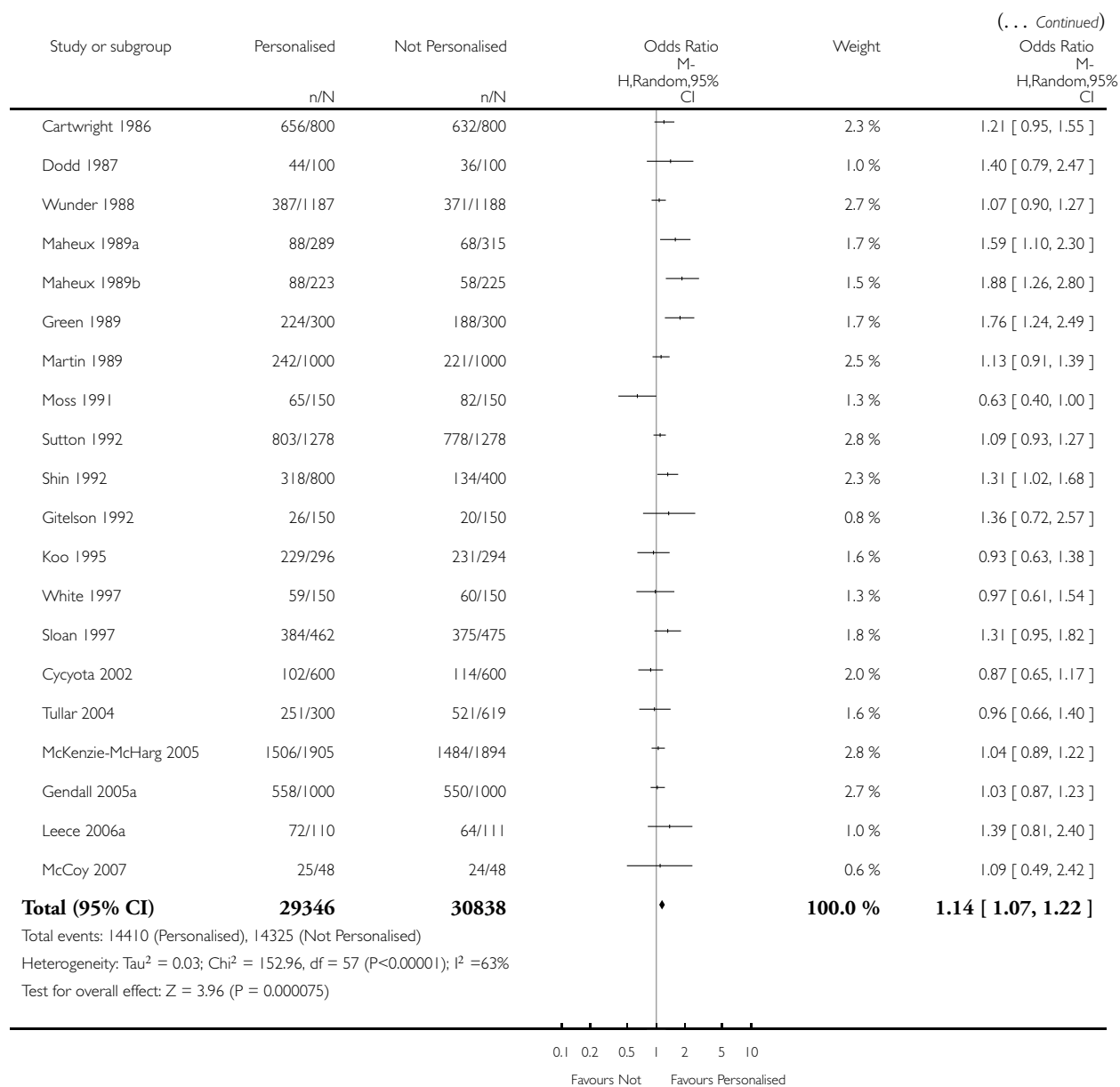
Comparison: 14 More vs. less personalised

Outcome: 2 Final response



(Continued ...)



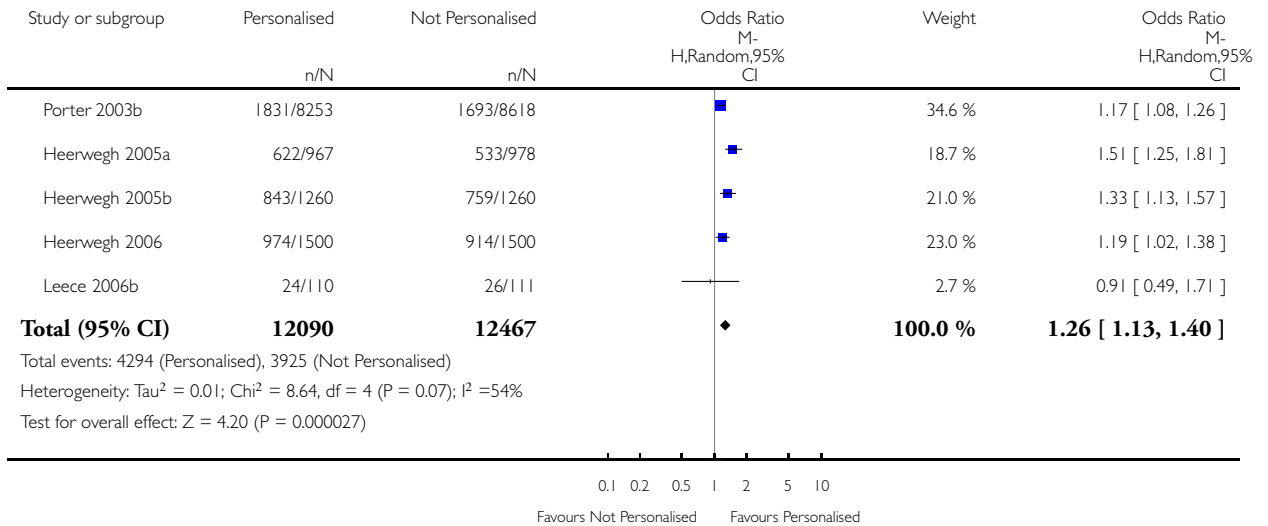


Analysis 14.3. Comparison 14 More vs. less personalised, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 14 More vs. less personalised

Outcome: 3 e - Login

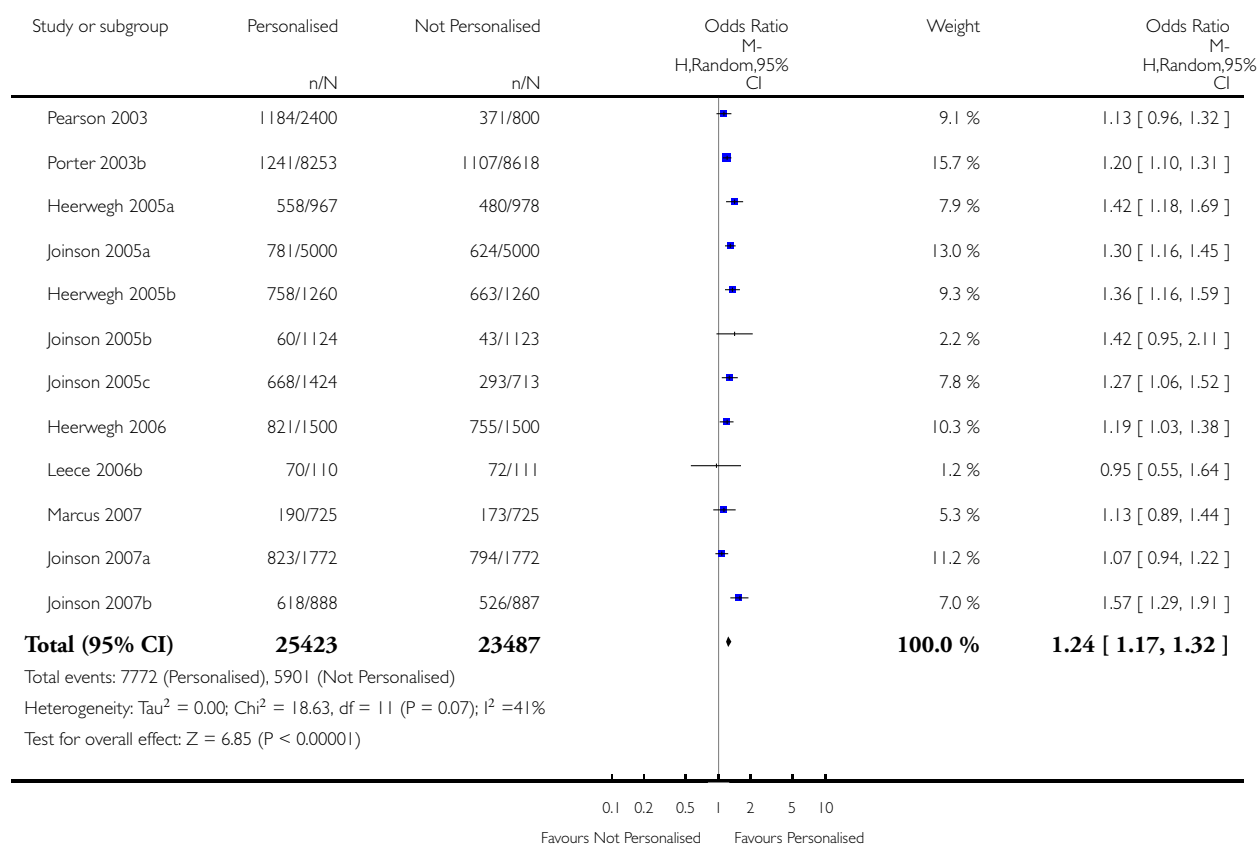


Analysis 14.4. Comparison 14 More vs. less personalised, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 14 More vs. less personalised

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

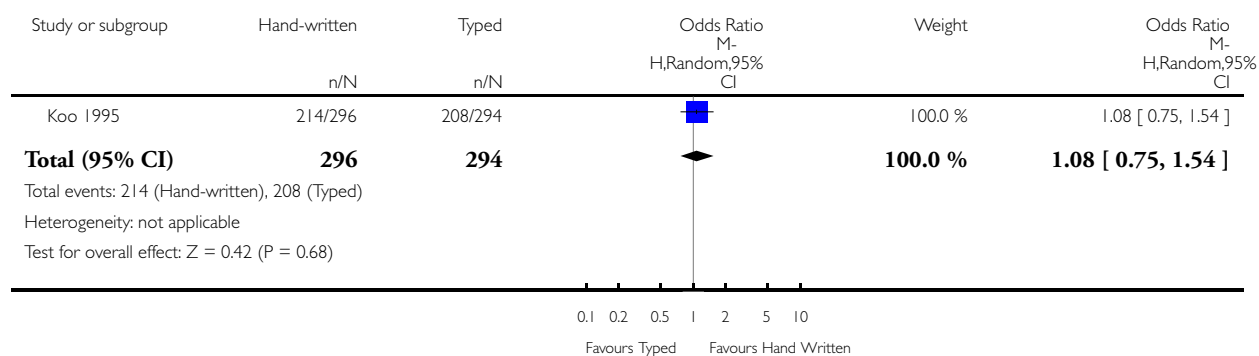


Analysis 15.1. Comparison 15 Hand-written vs. typed/facsimile/scanned/printed signature on covering letter, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 15 Hand-written vs. typed/facsimile/scanned/printed signature on covering letter

Outcome: 1 First response

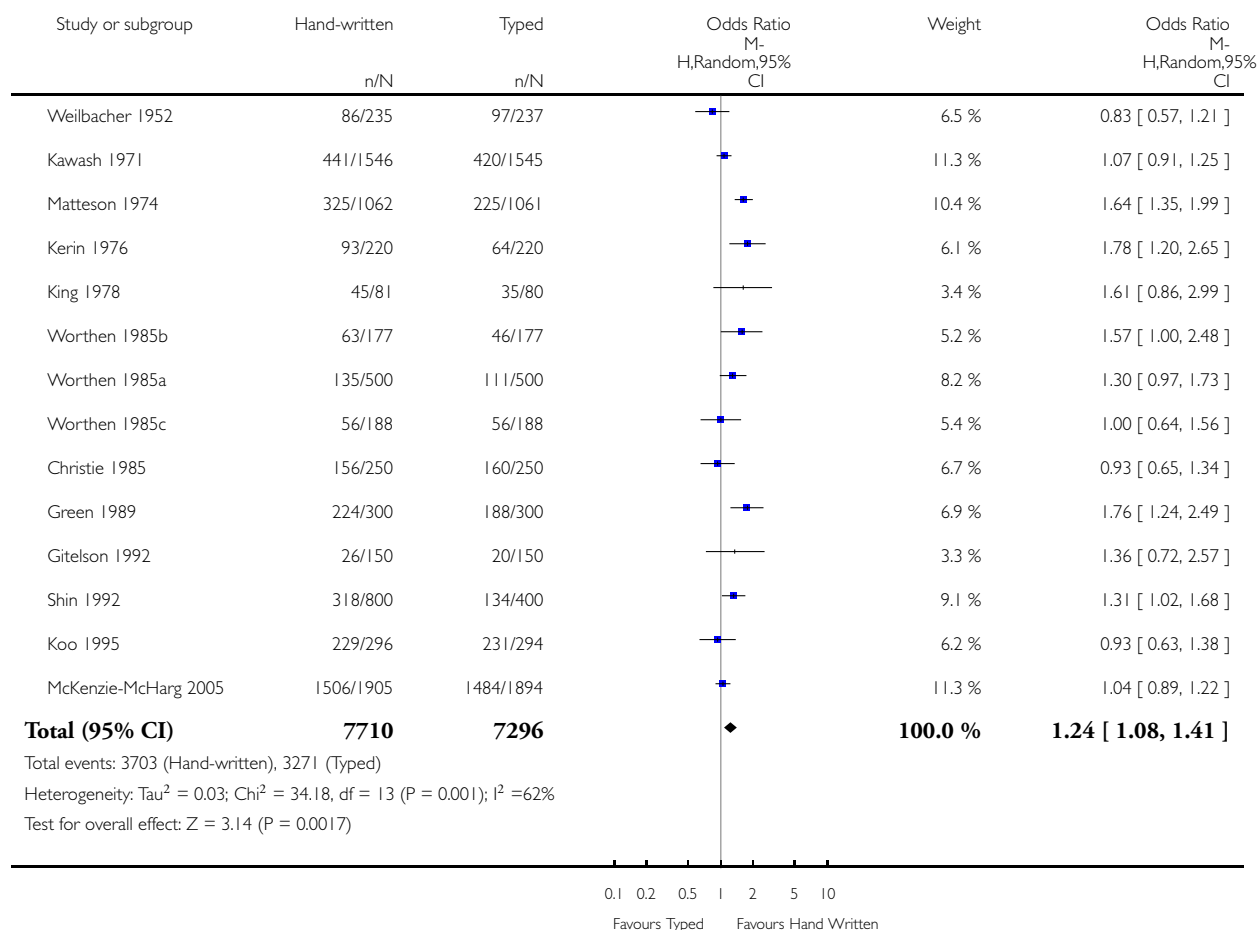


Analysis 15.2. Comparison 15 Hand-written vs. typed/facsimile/scanned/printed signature on covering letter, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 15 Hand-written vs. typed/facsimile/scanned/printed signature on covering letter

Outcome: 2 Final response

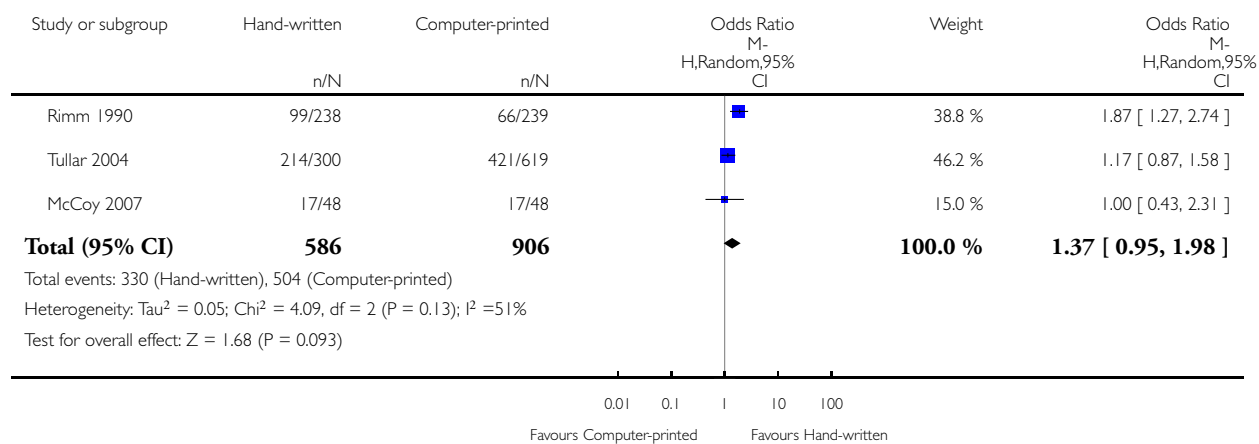


Analysis 16.1. Comparison 16 Hand-written address vs. computer-printed , Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 16 Hand-written address vs. computer-printed

Outcome: 1 First response

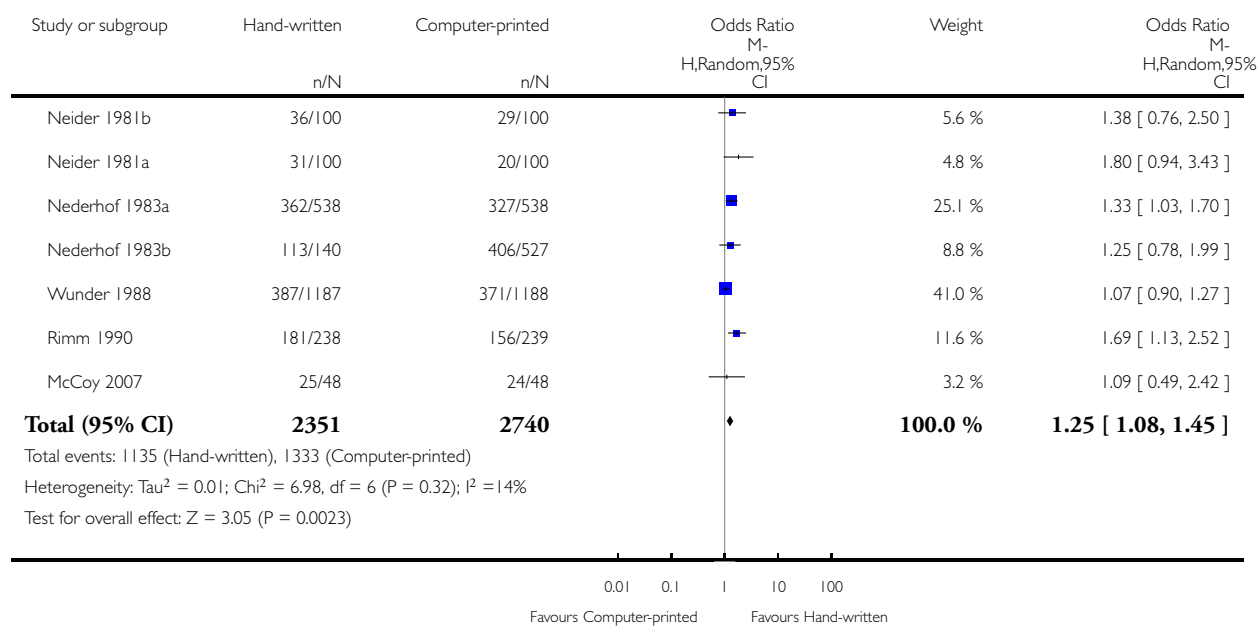


Analysis 16.2. Comparison 16 Hand-written address vs. computer-printed , Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 16 Hand-written address vs. computer-printed

Outcome: 2 Final response

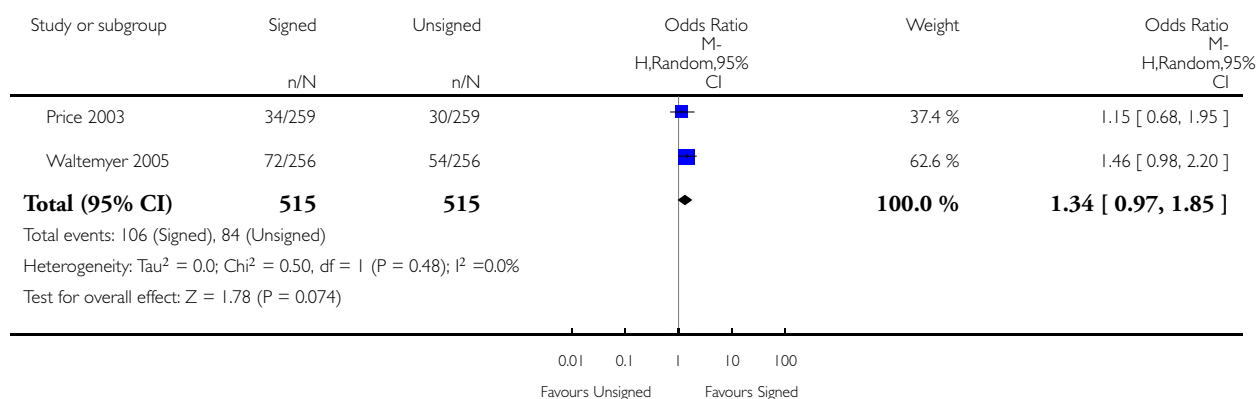


Analysis 17.2. Comparison 17 Signed vs. unsigned, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 17 Signed vs. unsigned

Outcome: 2 Final response

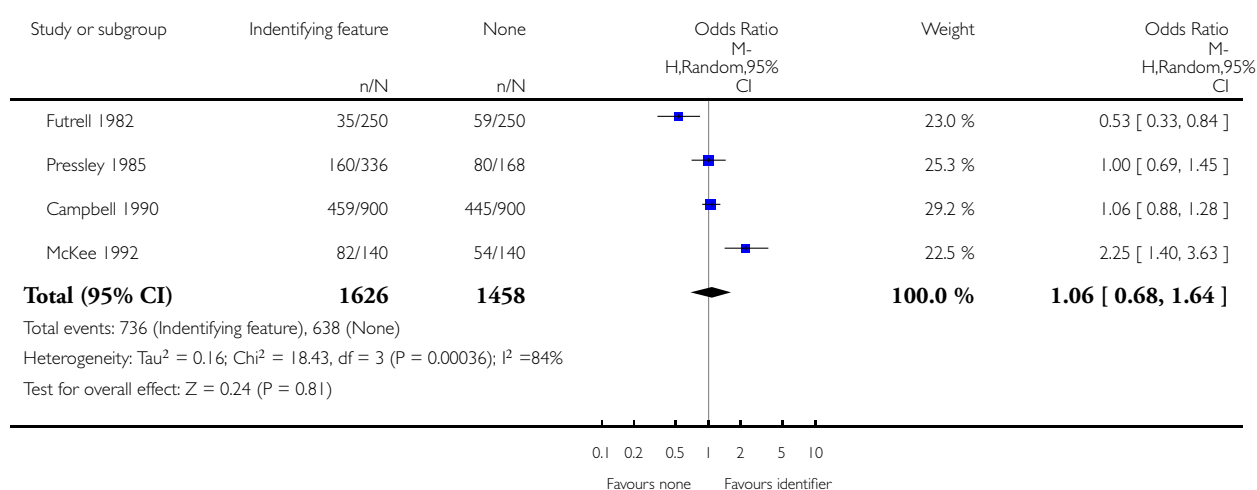


Analysis 18.1. Comparison 18 Identifying feature on return vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 18 Identifying feature on return vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

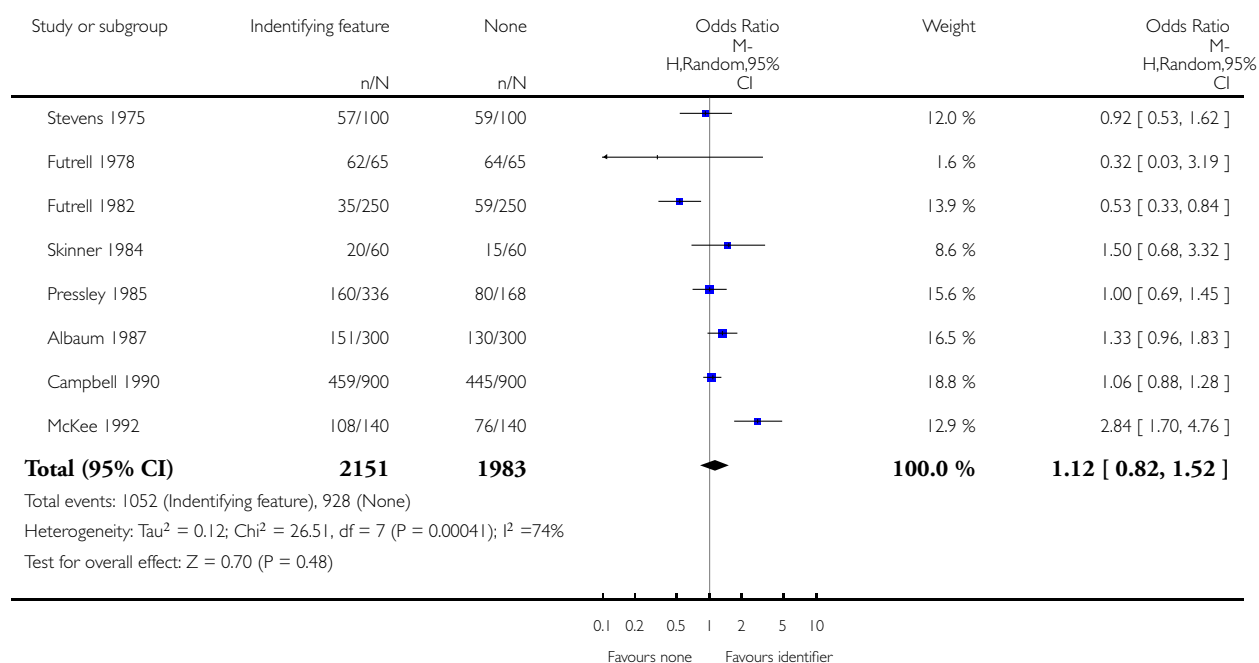


Analysis 18.2. Comparison 18 Identifying feature on return vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 18 Identifying feature on return vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

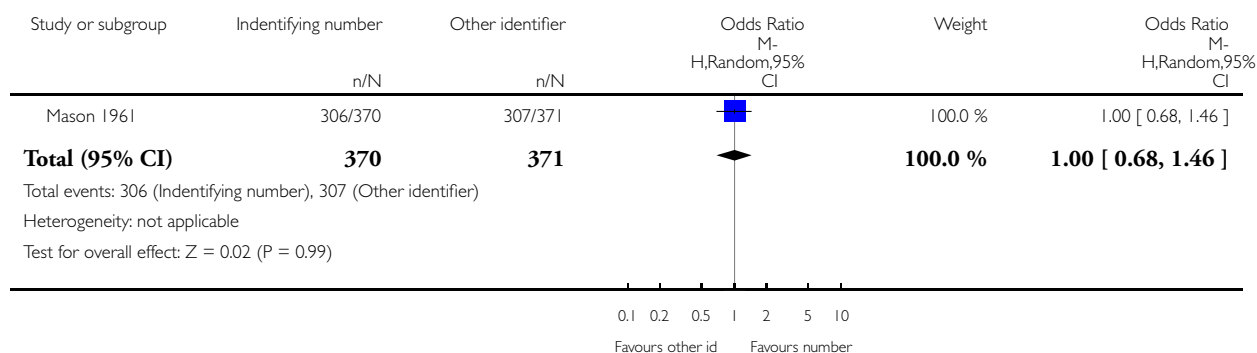


Analysis 19.1. Comparison 19 Identifying number on return vs. other identifier, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 19 Identifying number on return vs. other identifier

Outcome: 1 First response

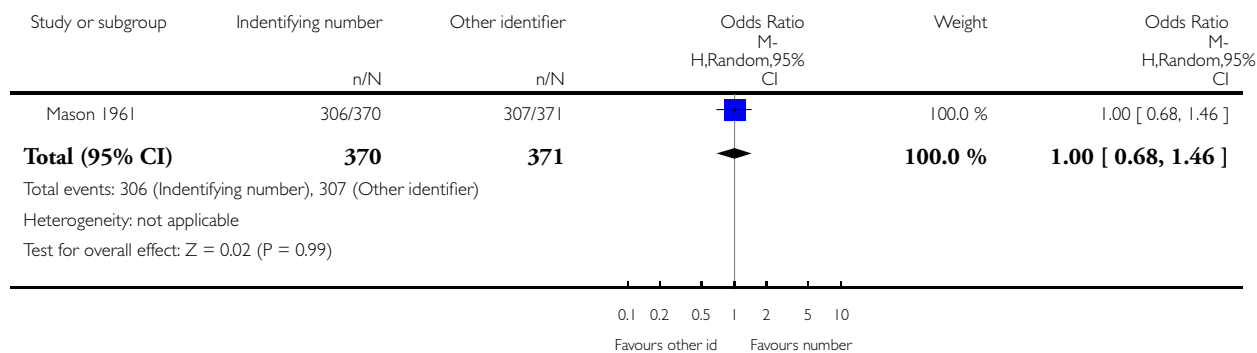


Analysis 19.2. Comparison 19 Identifying number on return vs. other identifier, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 19 Identifying number on return vs. other identifier

Outcome: 2 Final response

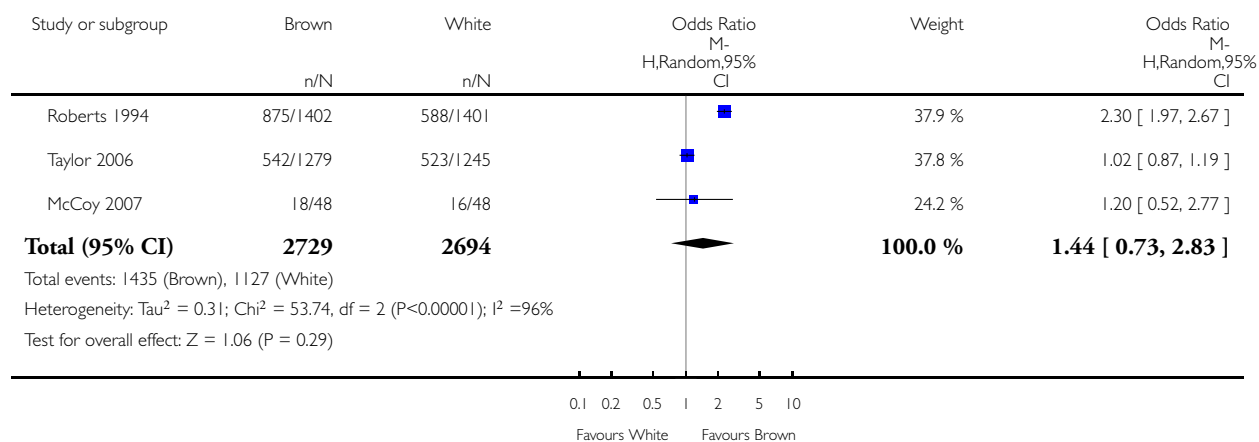


Analysis 20.1. Comparison 20 Brown vs. white envelope, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 20 Brown vs. white envelope

Outcome: 1 First response

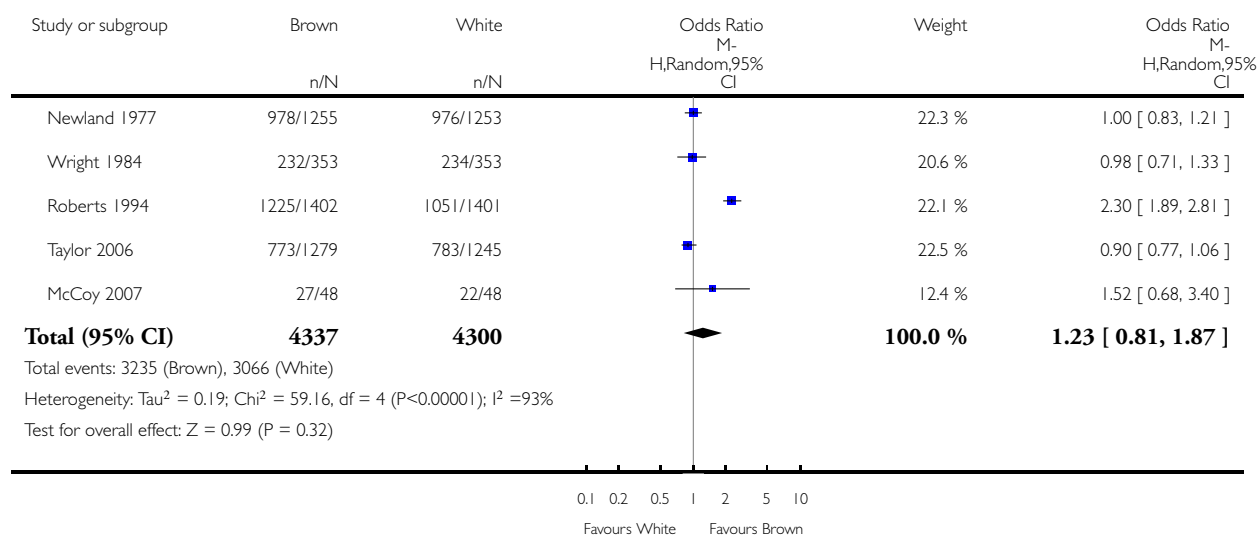


Analysis 20.2. Comparison 20 Brown vs. white envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 20 Brown vs. white envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

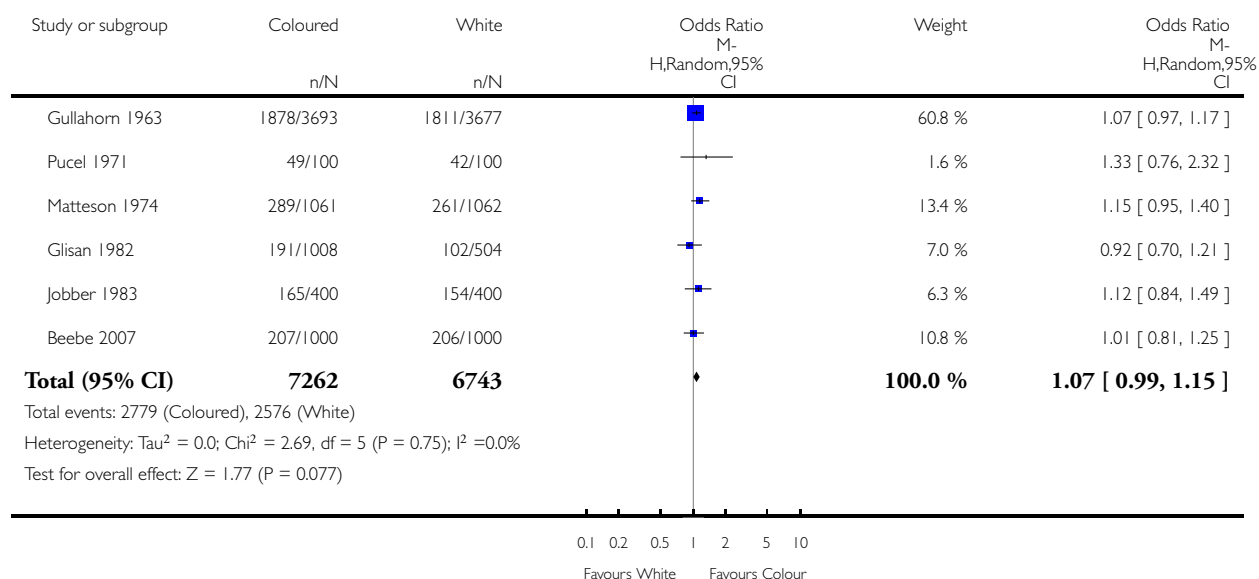


Analysis 21.1. Comparison 21 Coloured vs. white questionnaire, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 21 Coloured vs. white questionnaire

Outcome: 1 First response

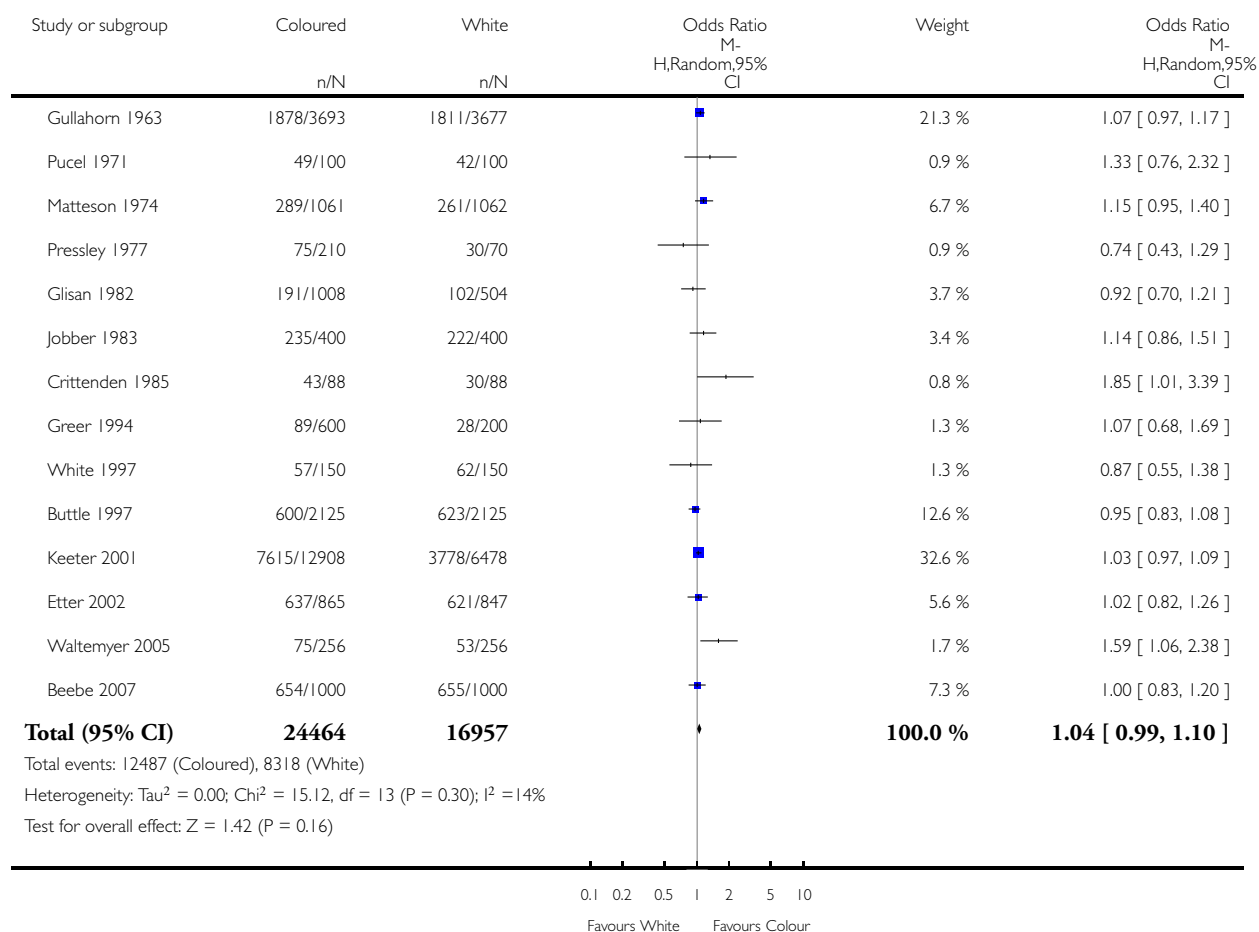


Analysis 21.2. Comparison 21 Coloured vs. white questionnaire, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 21 Coloured vs. white questionnaire

Outcome: 2 Final response

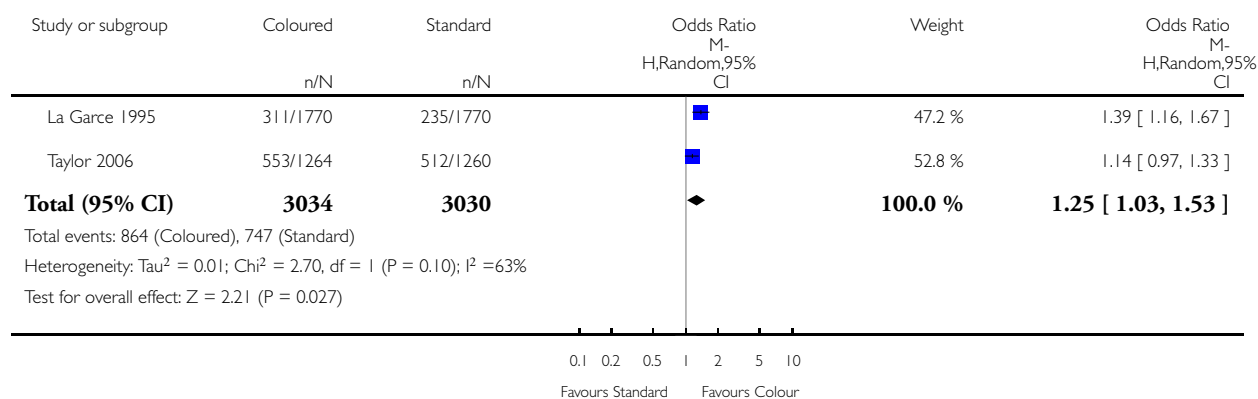


Analysis 22.1. Comparison 22 Coloured vs. standard (black/blue) ink, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 22 Coloured vs. standard (black/blue) ink

Outcome: 1 First response

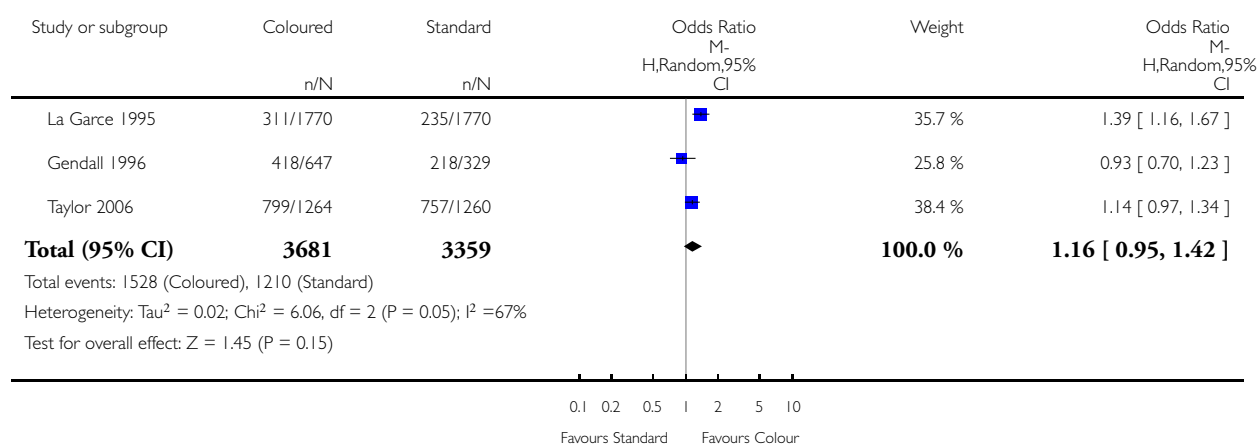


Analysis 22.2. Comparison 22 Coloured vs. standard (black/blue) ink, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 22 Coloured vs. standard (black/blue) ink

Outcome: 2 Final response

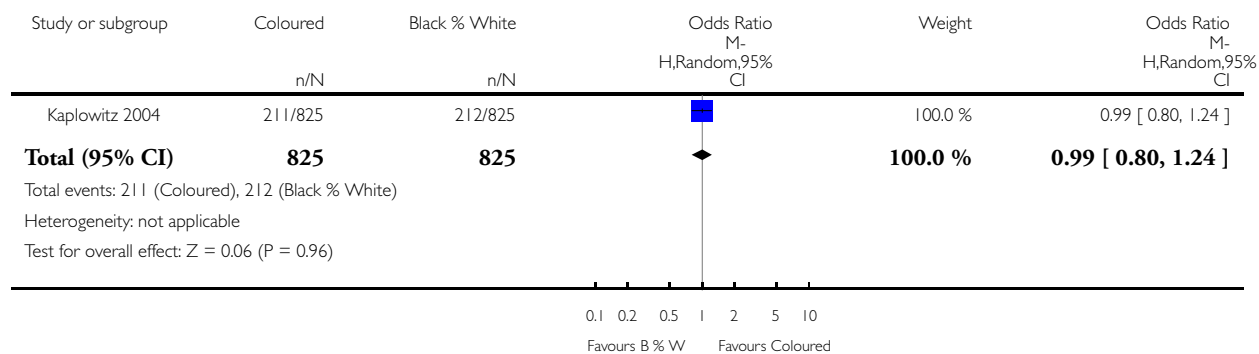


Analysis 23.1. Comparison 23 Coloured vs. black & white letterhead, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 23 Coloured vs. black & white letterhead

Outcome: 1 First response

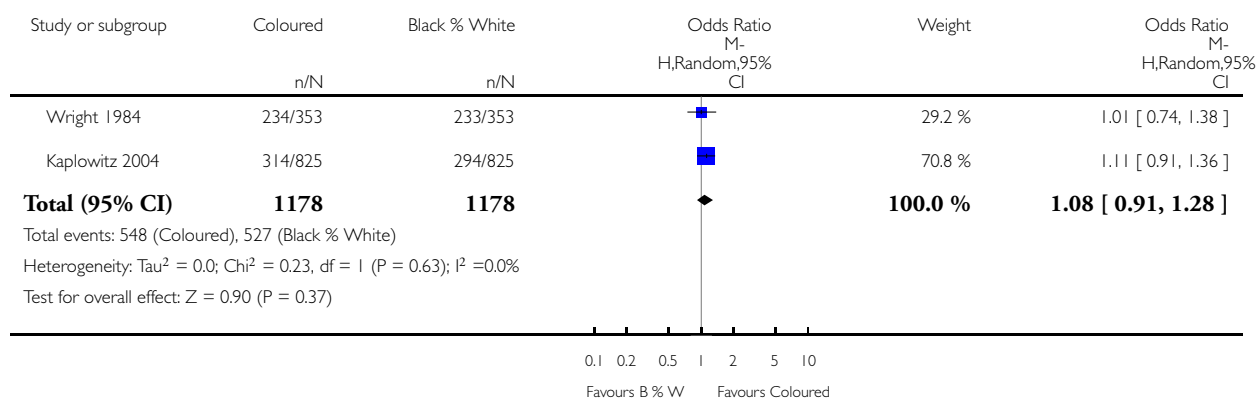


Analysis 23.2. Comparison 23 Coloured vs. black & white letterhead, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 23 Coloured vs. black % white letterhead

Outcome: 2 Final response

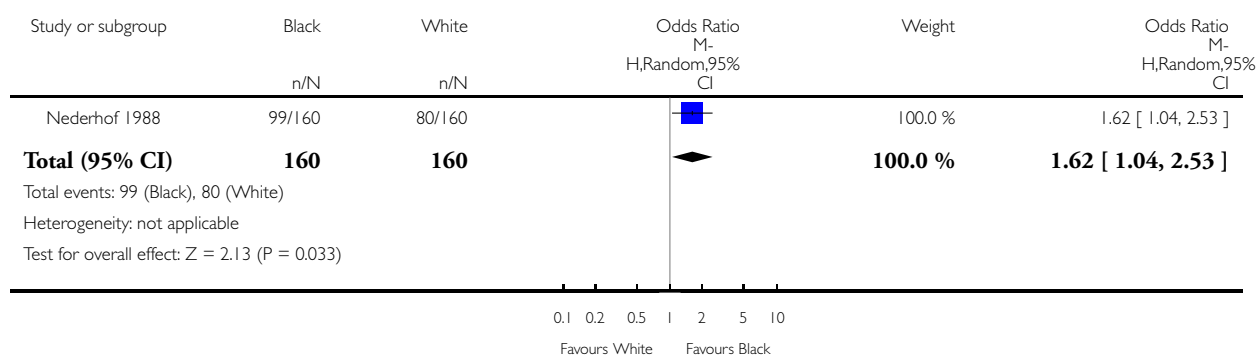


Analysis 24.2. Comparison 24 Illustration on cover of q'aire largely in black vs. largely in white, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 24 Illustration on cover of q'aire largely in black vs. largely in white

Outcome: 2 Final response

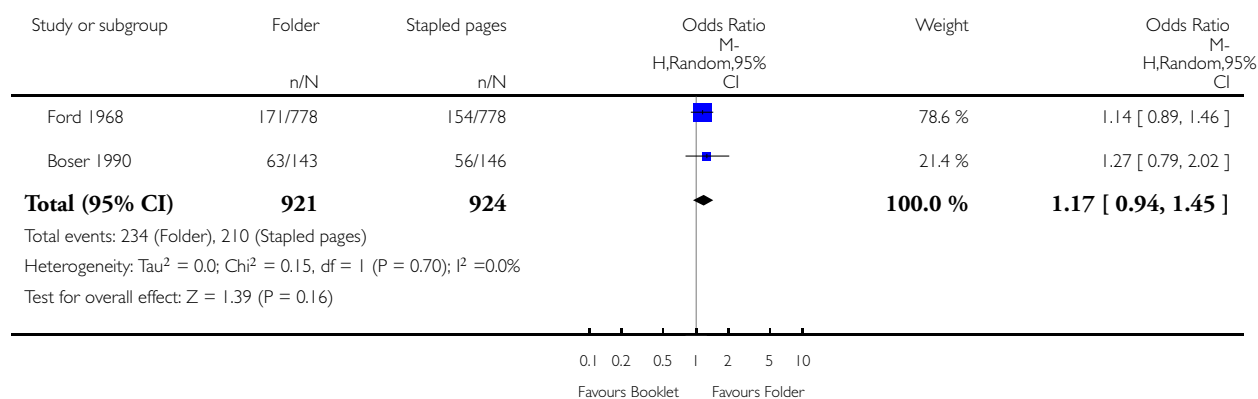


Analysis 25.1. Comparison 25 Folder or booklet vs. stapled pages, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 25 Folder or booklet vs. stapled pages

Outcome: 1 First response

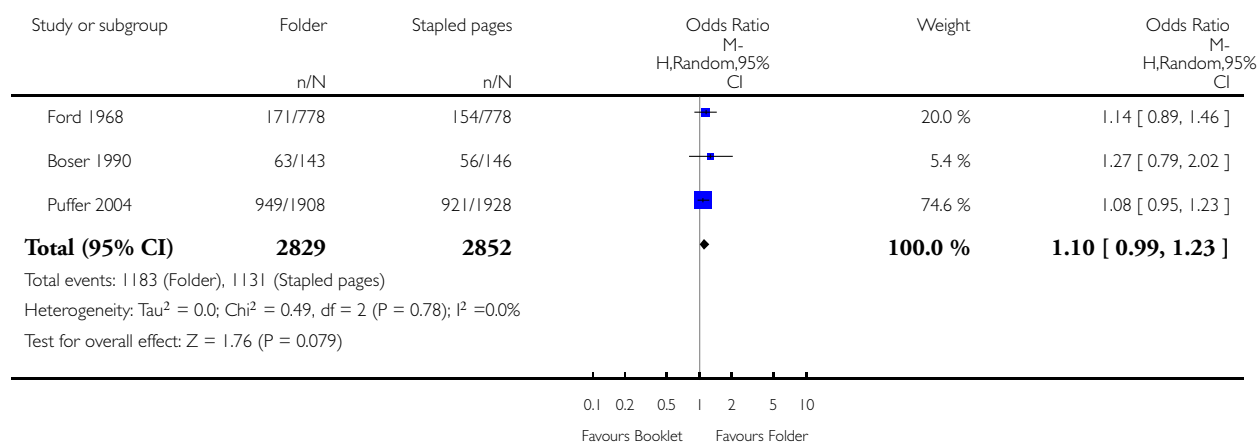


Analysis 25.2. Comparison 25 Folder or booklet vs. stapled pages, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 25 Folder or booklet vs. stapled pages

Outcome: 2 Final response

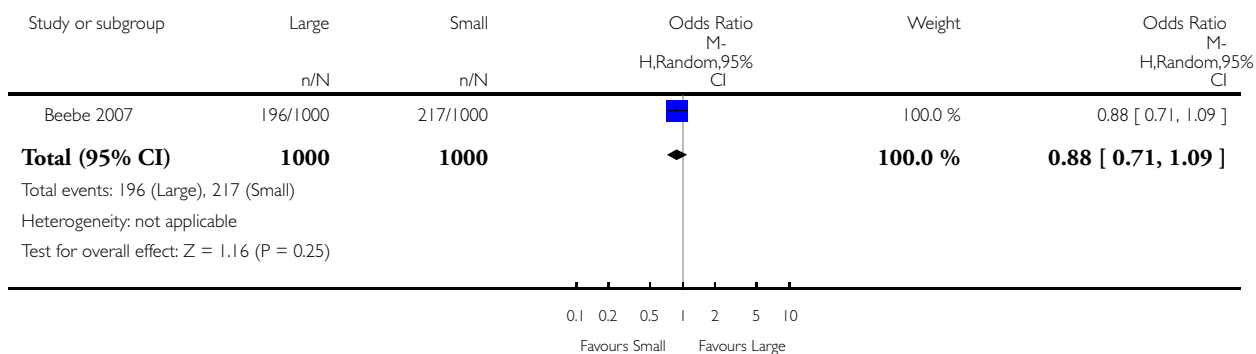


Analysis 26.1. Comparison 26 Large paper size vs. small, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 26 Large paper size vs. small

Outcome: 1 First response

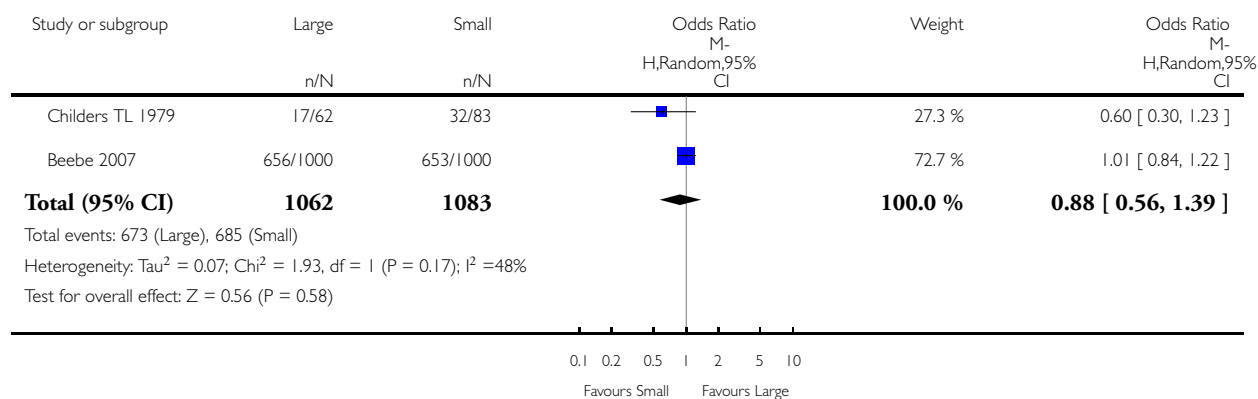


Analysis 26.2. Comparison 26 Large paper size vs. small, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 26 Large paper size vs. small

Outcome: 2 Final response

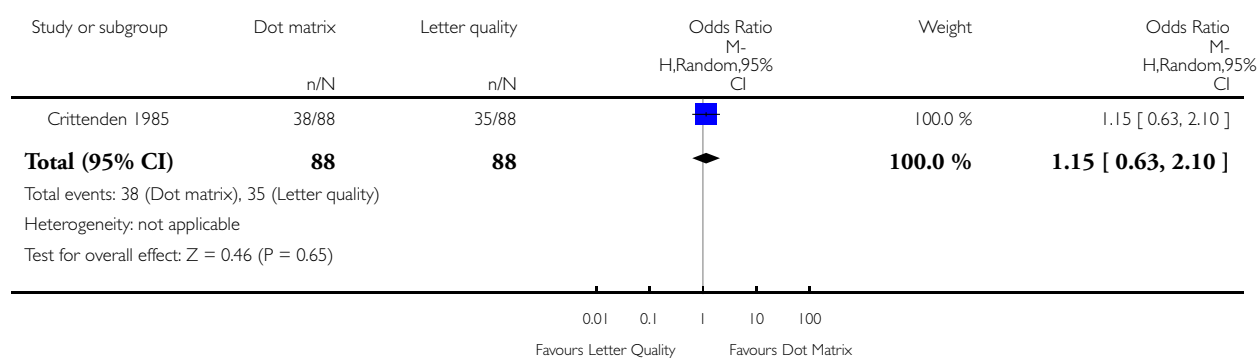


Analysis 27.2. Comparison 27 Dot matrix print vs. letter quality print, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 27 Dot matrix print vs. letter quality print

Outcome: 2 Final response

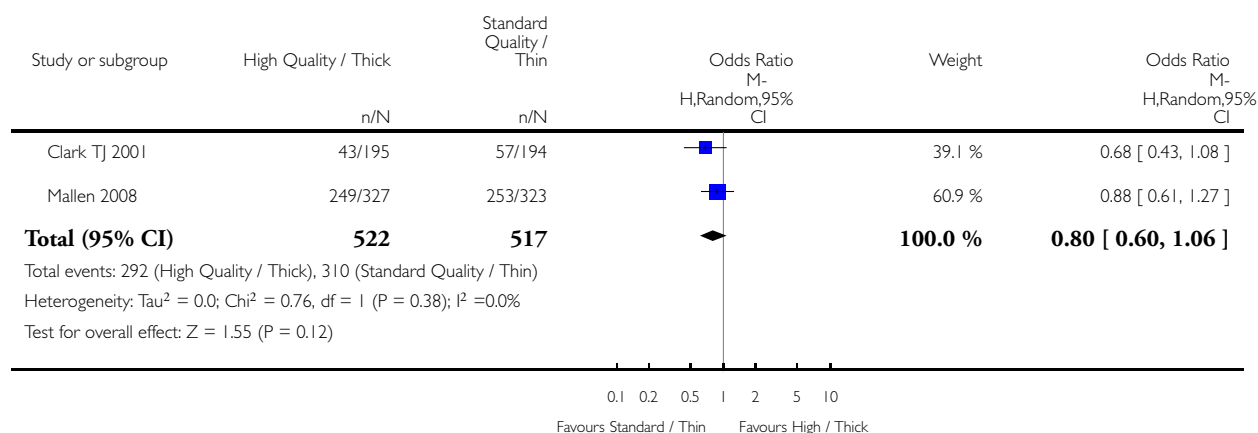


Analysis 28.2. Comparison 28 Questionnaire printed on high vs. standard quality paper or thick paper vs. thin, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 28 Questionnaire printed on high vs. standard quality paper or thick paper vs. thin

Outcome: 2 Final response

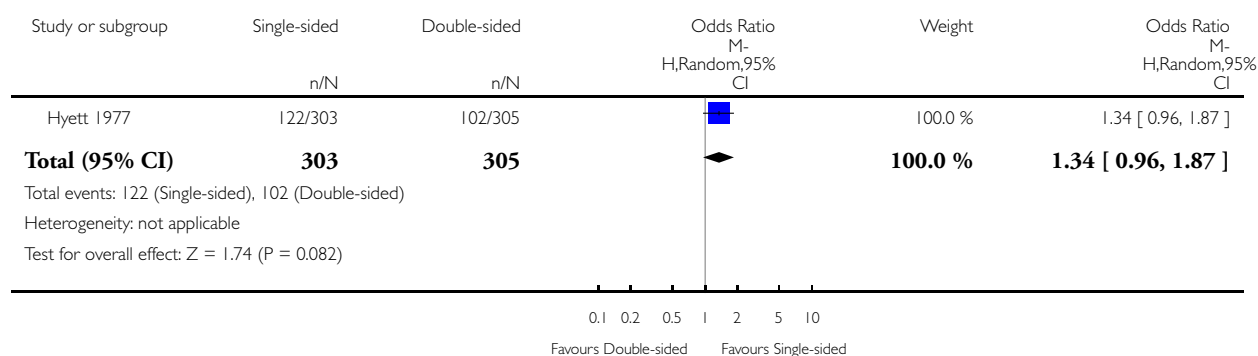


Analysis 29.1. Comparison 29 Single vs. double-sided questionnaire, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 29 Single vs. double-sided questionnaire

Outcome: 1 First response

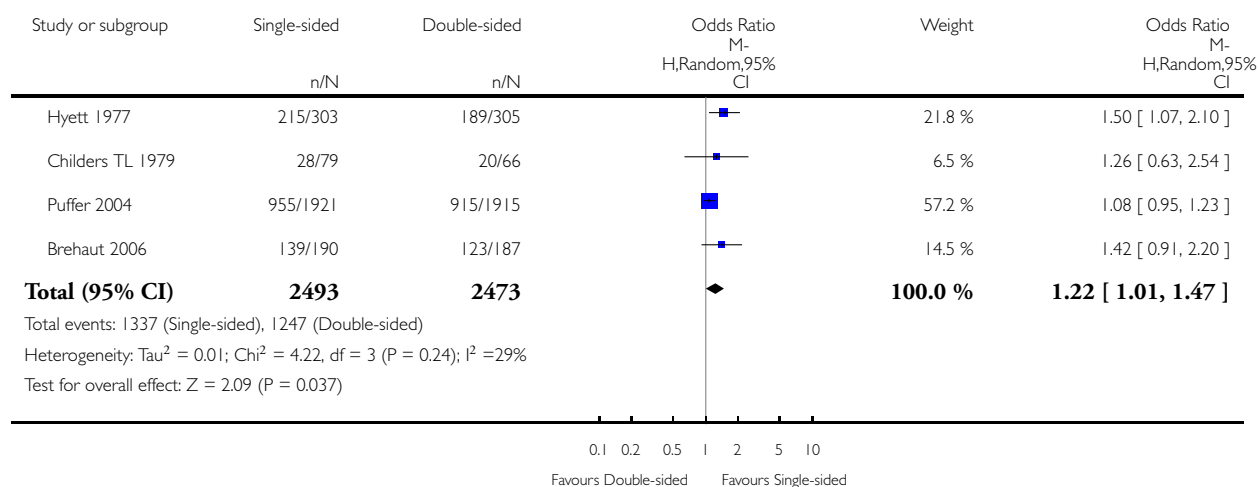


Analysis 29.2. Comparison 29 Single vs. double-sided questionnaire, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 29 Single vs. double-sided questionnaire

Outcome: 2 Final response

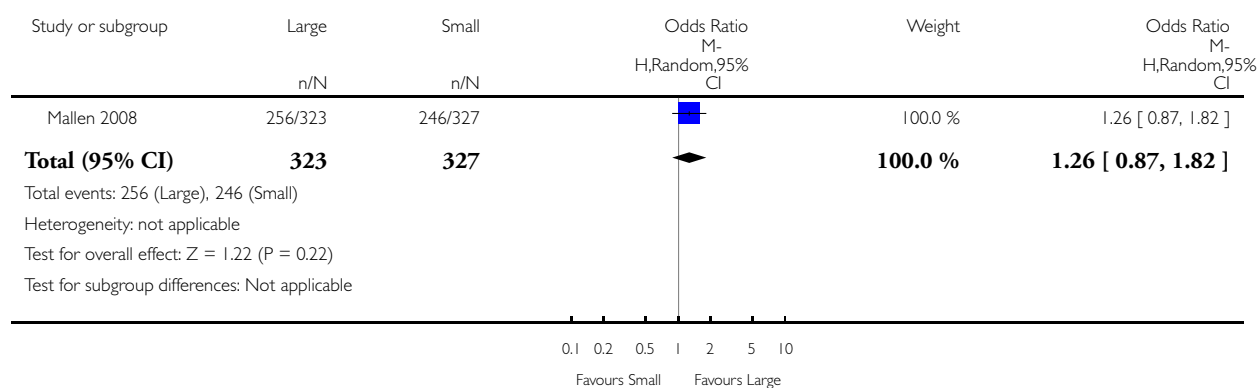


Analysis 30.2. Comparison 30 Large font size vs. small, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 30 Large font size vs. small

Outcome: 2 Final response

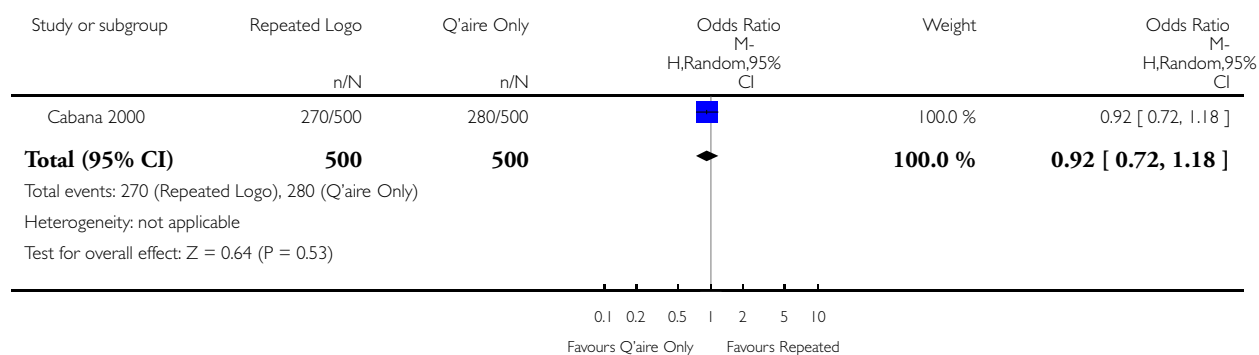


Analysis 31.2. Comparison 31 Study logo on several items in the mailing package vs. on questionnaire only, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 31 Study logo on several items in the mailing package vs. on questionnaire only

Outcome: 2 Final response

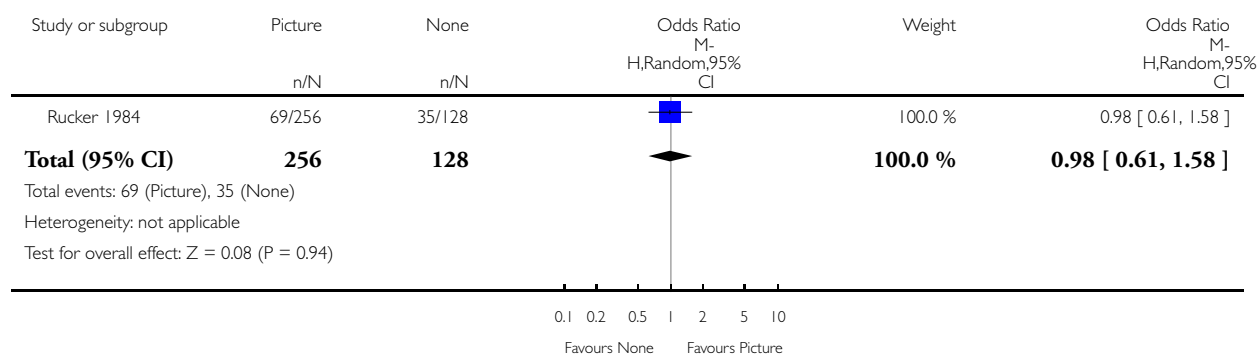


Analysis 32.1. Comparison 32 Picture of researcher/images vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 32 Picture of researcher/images vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

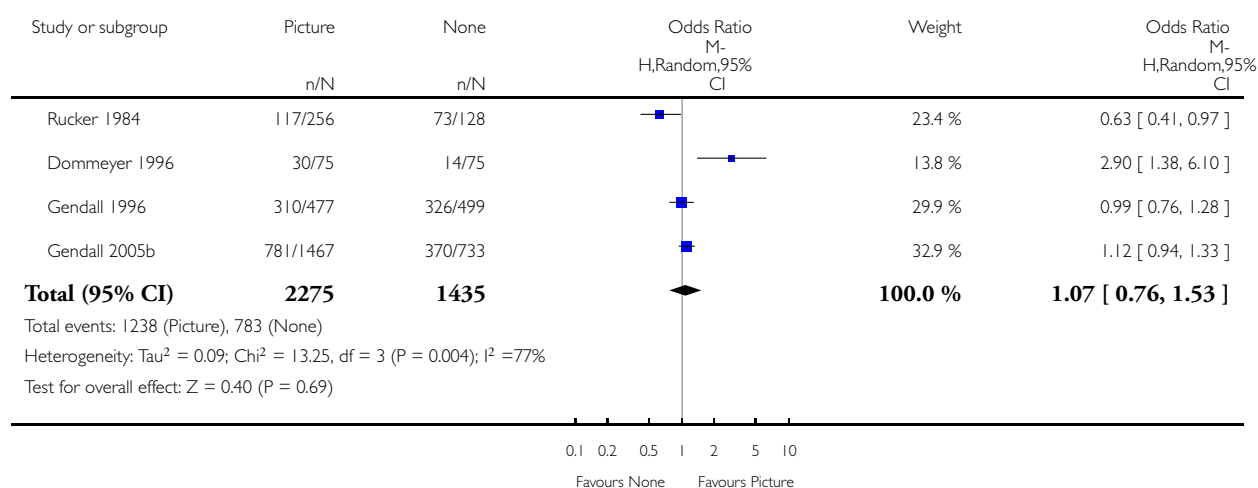


Analysis 32.2. Comparison 32 Picture of researcher/images vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 32 Picture of researcher/images vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

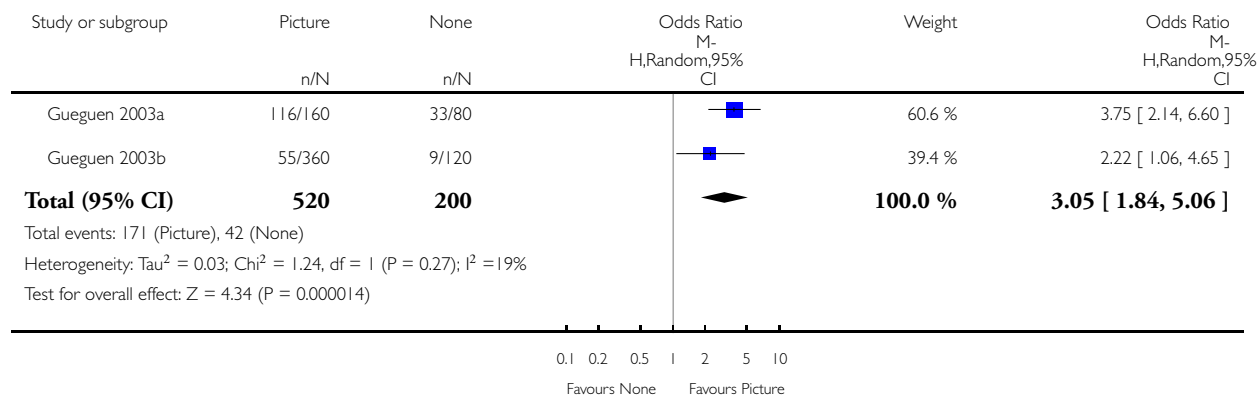


Analysis 32.4. Comparison 32 Picture of researcher/images vs. none, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 32 Picture of researcher/images vs. none

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

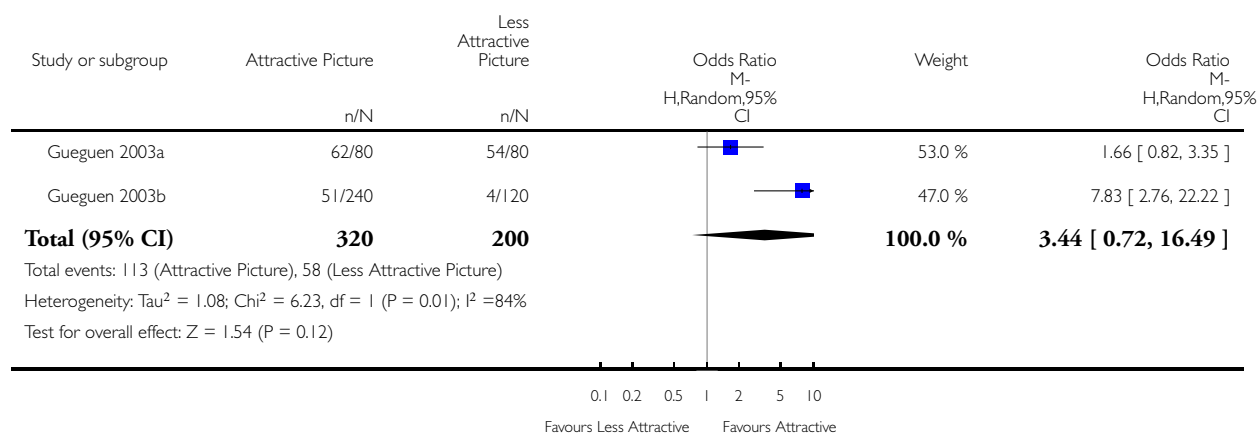


Analysis 33.4. Comparison 33 Attractive vs. less attractive picture, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 33 Attractive vs. less attractive picture

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

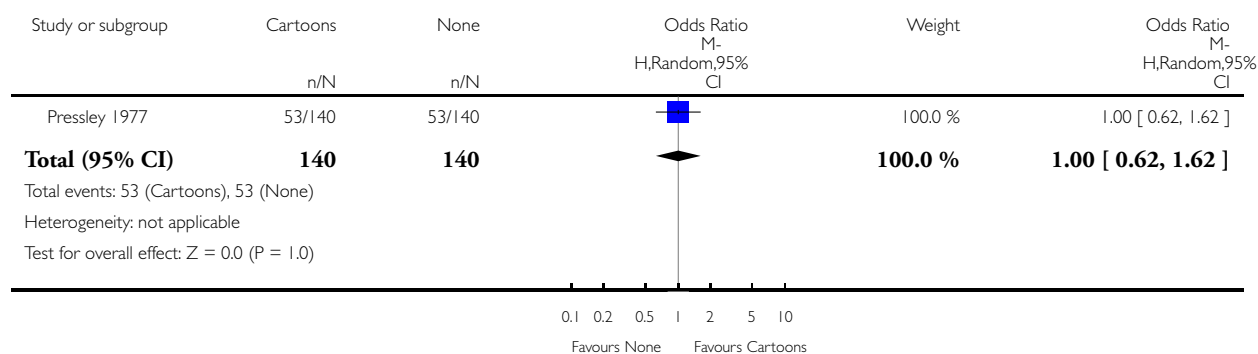


Analysis 34.2. Comparison 34 Cartoons included vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 34 Cartoons included vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

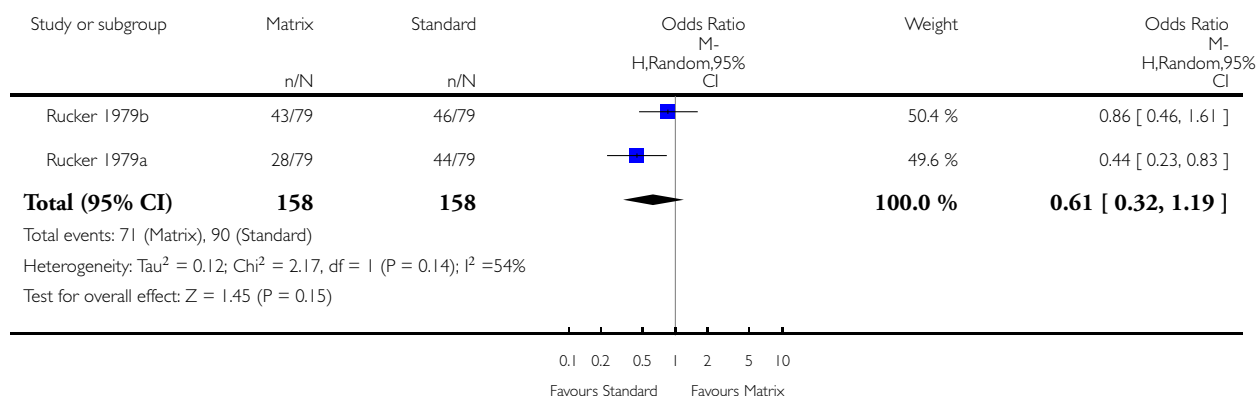


Analysis 35.1. Comparison 35 Matrix vs. standard form, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 35 Matrix vs. standard form

Outcome: 1 First response

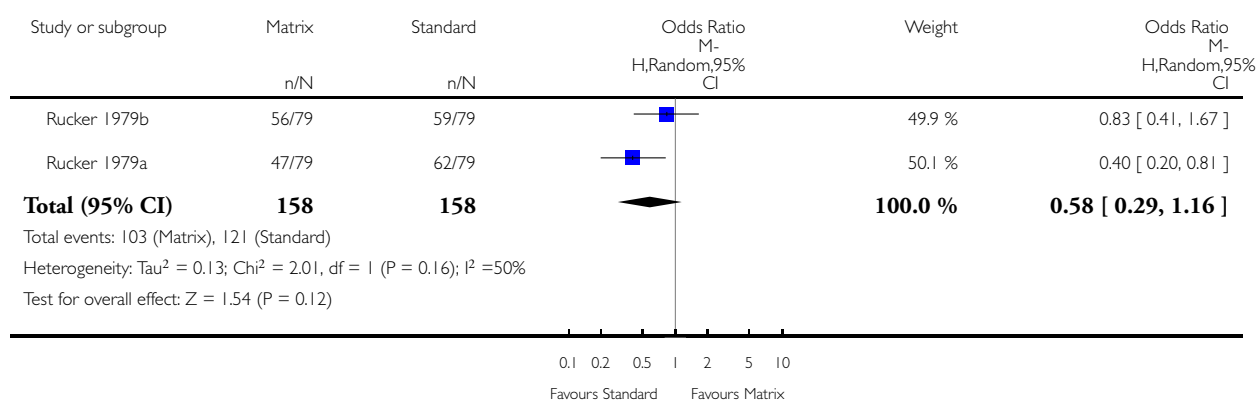


Analysis 35.2. Comparison 35 Matrix vs. standard form, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 35 Matrix vs. standard form

Outcome: 2 Final response

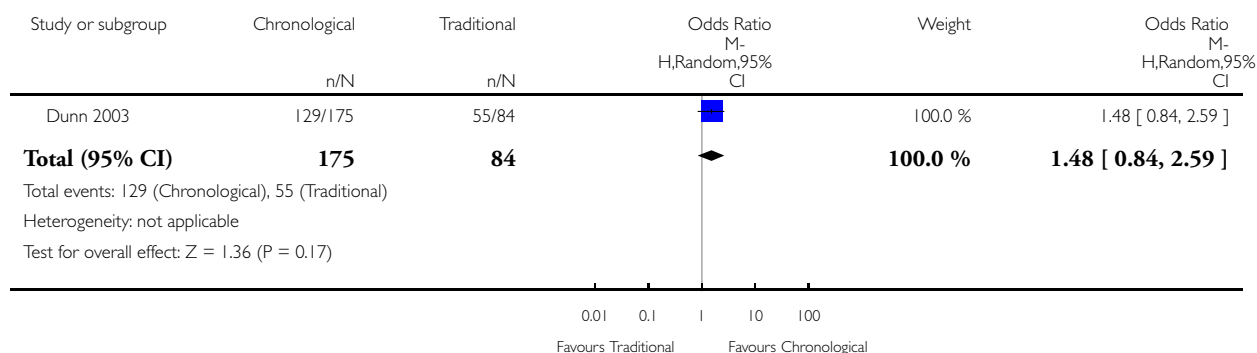


Analysis 36.3. Comparison 36 Questions ordered by time period vs. other order, Outcome 3 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 36 Questions ordered by time period vs. other order

Outcome: 3 Final response

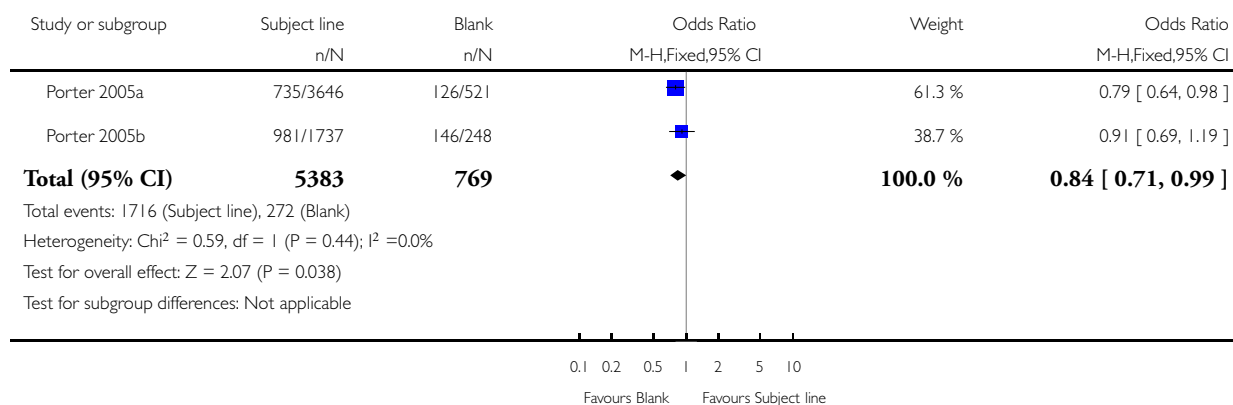


Analysis 37.1. Comparison 37 Subject line vs. blank, Outcome 1 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 37 Subject line vs. blank

Outcome: 1 e - Login

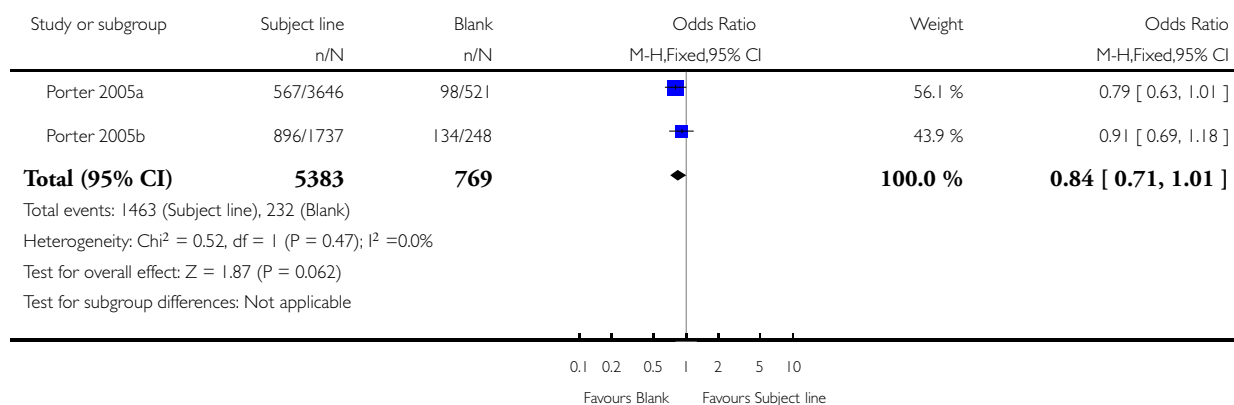


Analysis 37.2. Comparison 37 Subject line vs. blank, Outcome 2 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 37 Subject line vs. blank

Outcome: 2 e - Submission

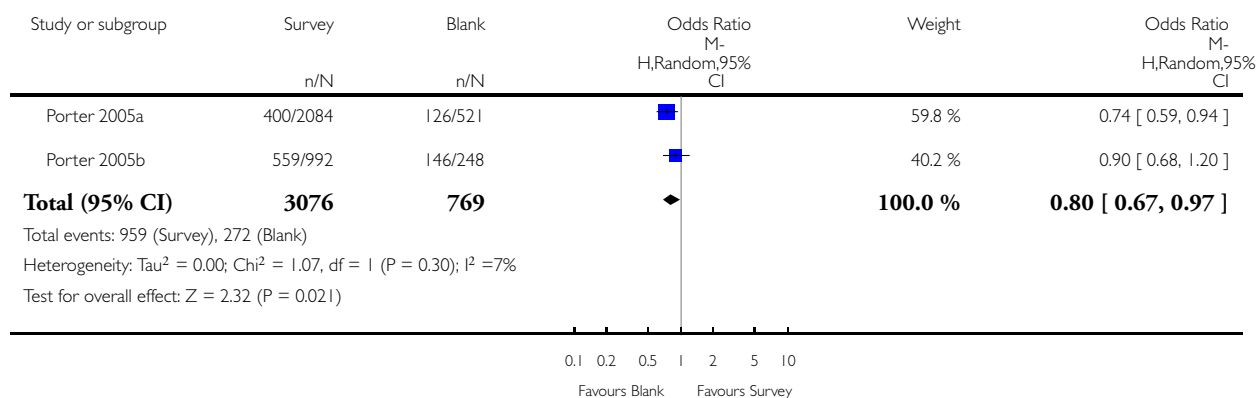


Analysis 38.1. Comparison 38 "Survey" subject line vs. blank, Outcome 1 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 38 "Survey" subject line vs. blank

Outcome: 1 e - Login

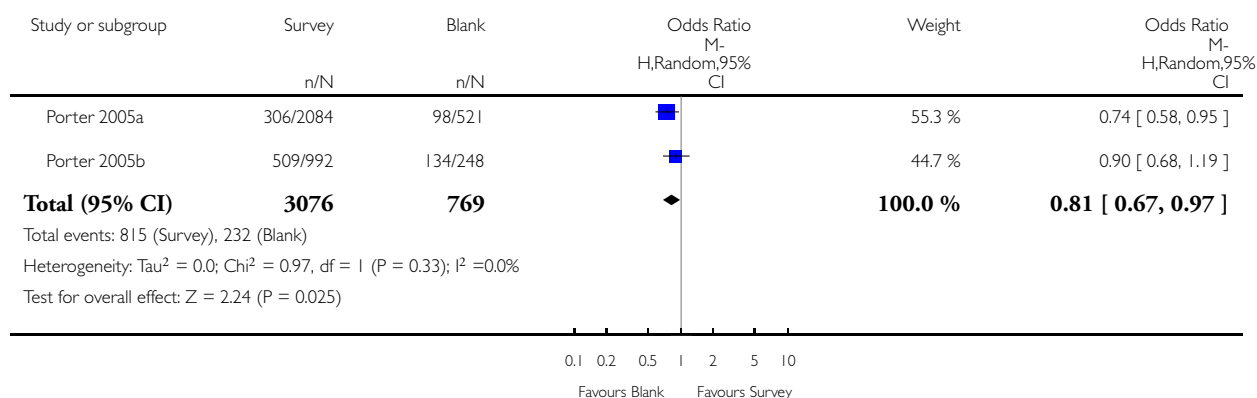


Analysis 38.2. Comparison 38 "Survey" subject line vs. blank, Outcome 2 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 38 "Survey" subject line vs. blank

Outcome: 2 e - Submission

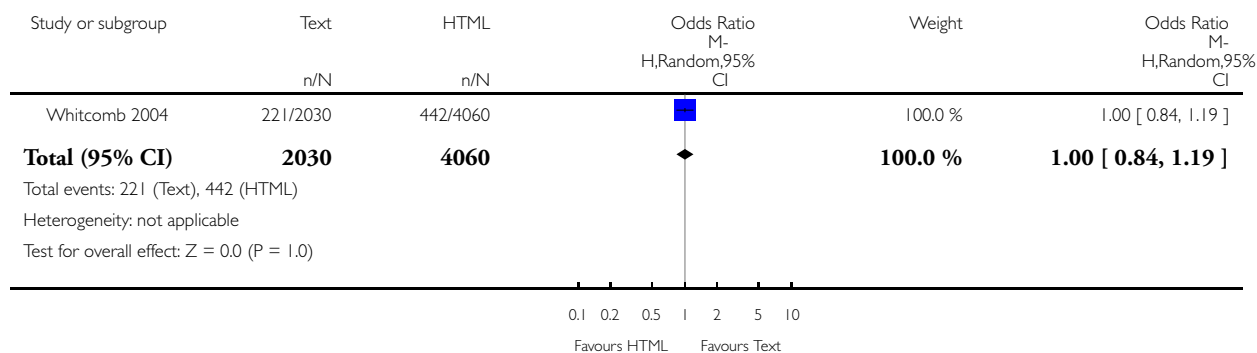


Analysis 39.2. Comparison 39 Text vs. HTML file formats, Outcome 2 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 39 Text vs. HTML file formats

Outcome: 2 e - Submission

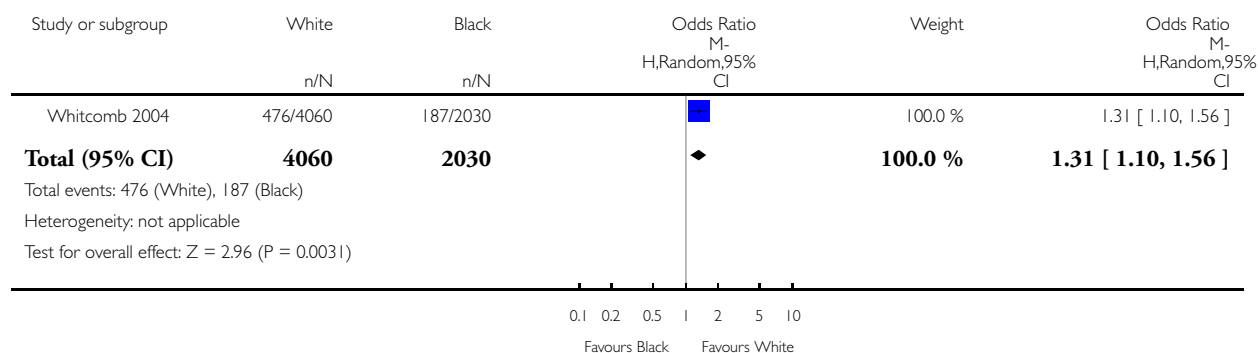


Analysis 40.2. Comparison 40 White background vs. black, Outcome 2 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 40 White background vs. black

Outcome: 2 e - Submission

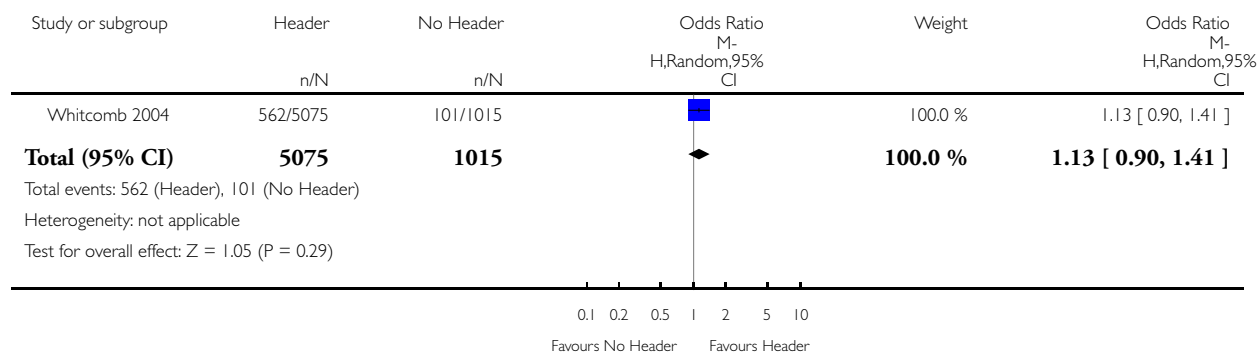


Analysis 41.2. Comparison 41 Header vs. no header, Outcome 2 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 41 Header vs. no header

Outcome: 2 e - Submission

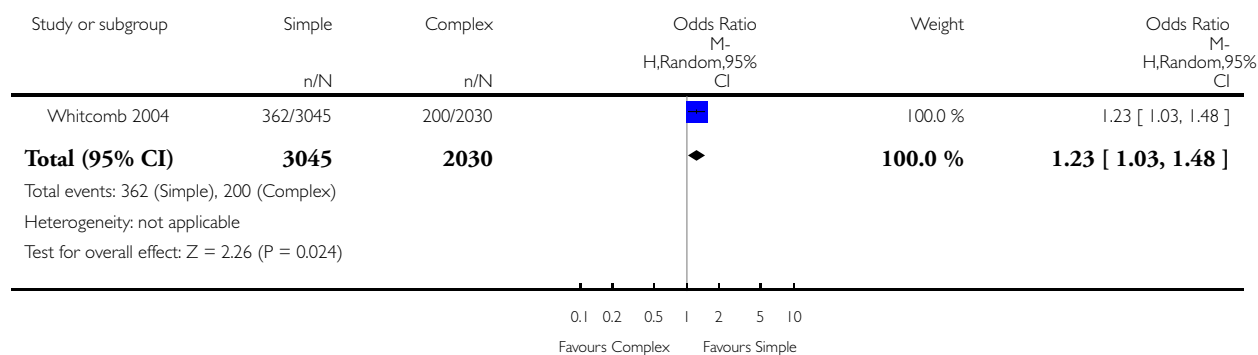


Analysis 42.2. Comparison 42 Simple vs. complex header, Outcome 2 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 42 Simple vs. complex header

Outcome: 2 e - Submission

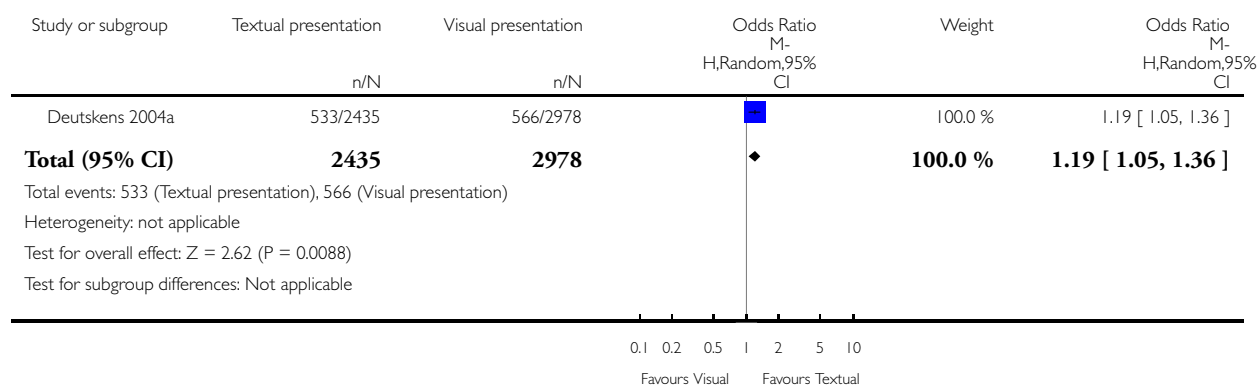


Analysis 43.4. Comparison 43 Textual presentation of response categories vs. visual presentation, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 43 Textual presentation of response categories vs. visual presentation

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

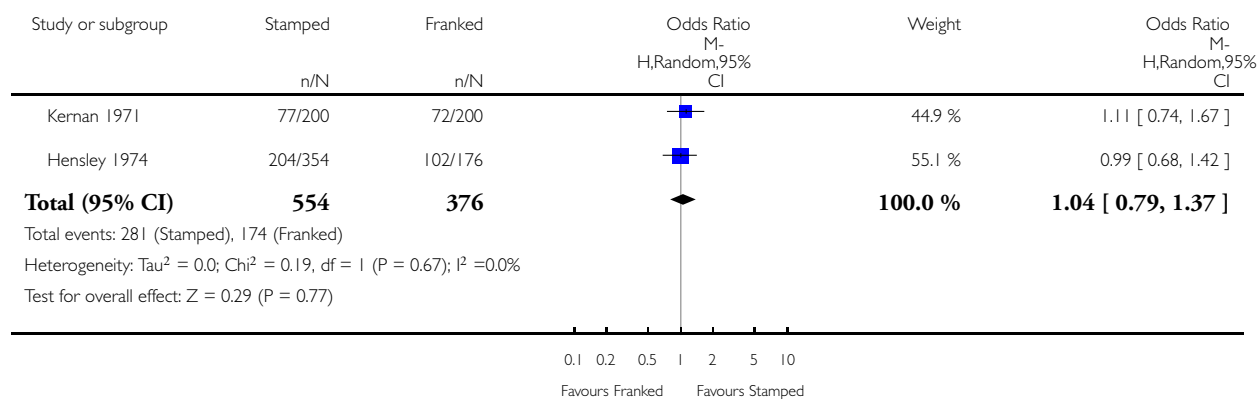


Analysis 44.1. Comparison 44 Stamped vs. franked outward envelope, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 44 Stamped vs. franked outward envelope

Outcome: 1 First response

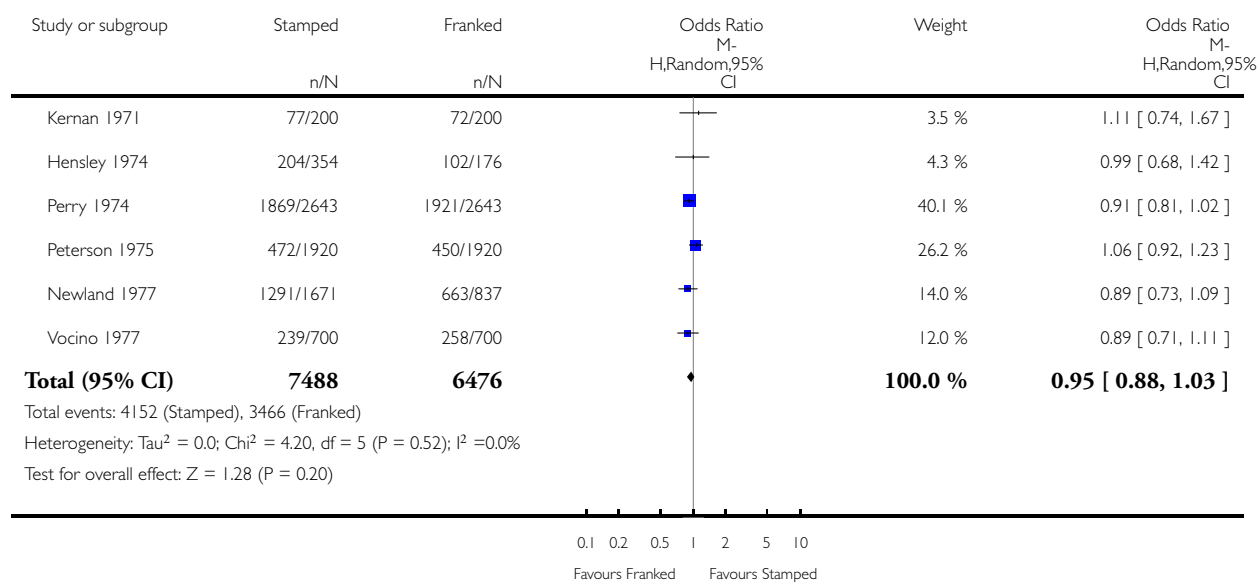


Analysis 44.2. Comparison 44 Stamped vs. franked outward envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 44 Stamped vs. franked outward envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

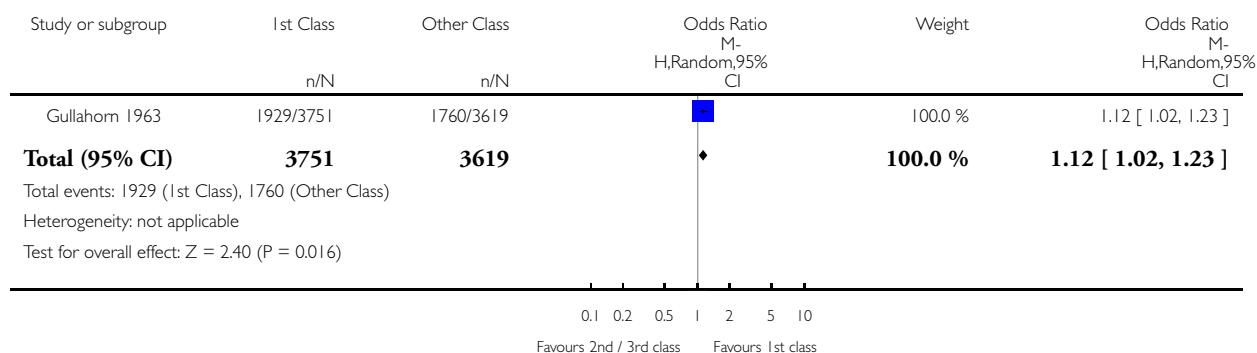


Analysis 45.1. Comparison 45 First vs. second/third class outward mailing, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 45 First vs. second/third class outward mailing

Outcome: 1 First response

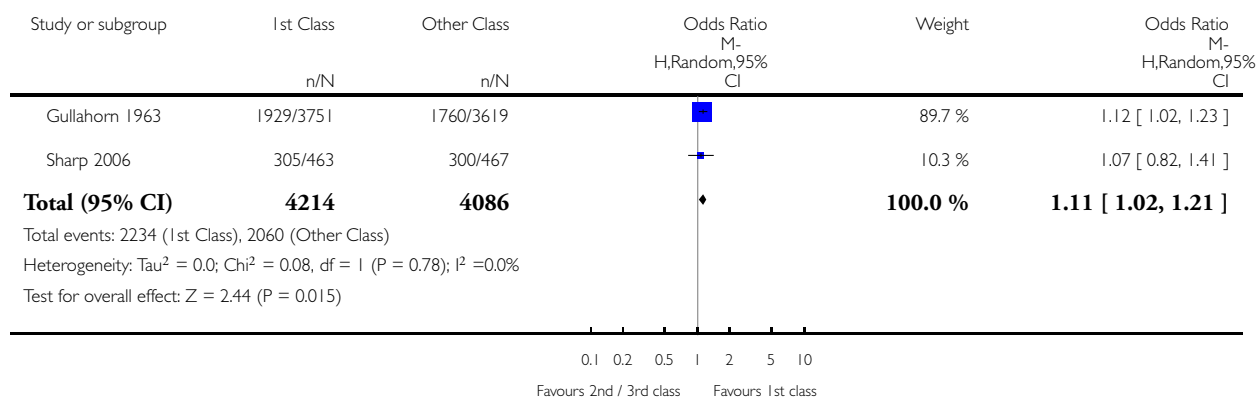


Analysis 45.2. Comparison 45 First vs. second/third class outward mailing, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 45 First vs. second/third class outward mailing

Outcome: 2 Final response

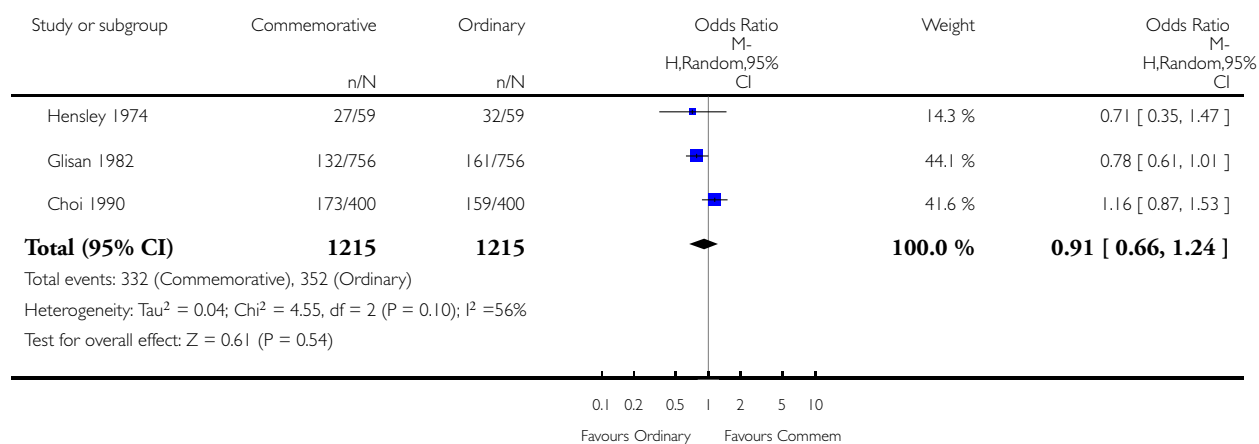


Analysis 46.1. Comparison 46 Commemorative/race-specific vs. ordinary stamp on return envelope, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 46 Commemorative/race-specific vs. ordinary stamp on return envelope

Outcome: 1 First response

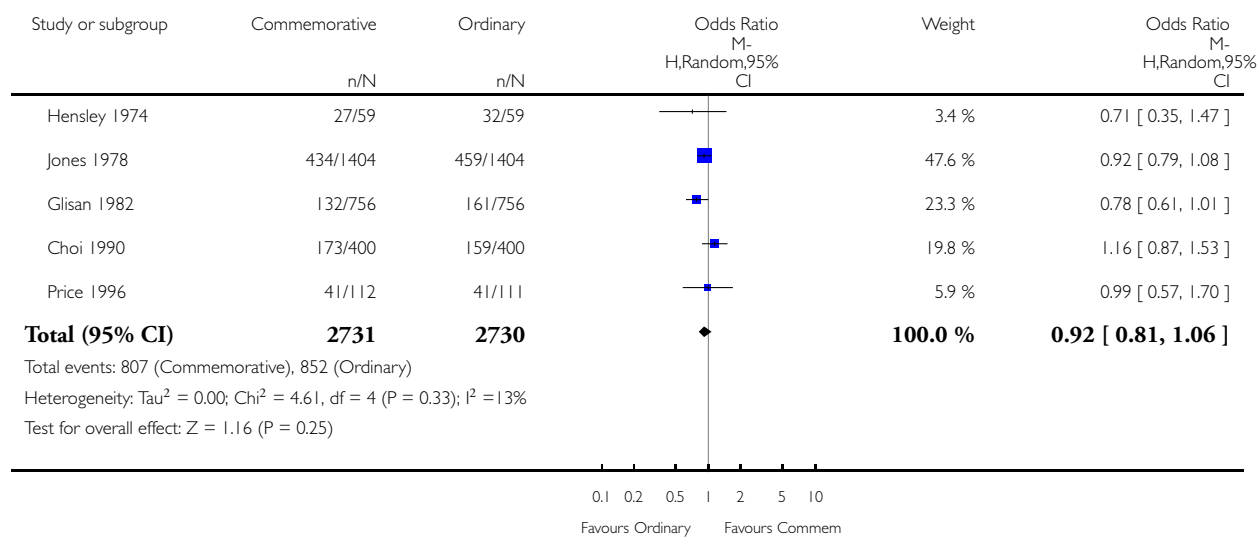


Analysis 46.2. Comparison 46 Commemorative/race-specific vs. ordinary stamp on return envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 46 Commemorative/race-specific vs. ordinary stamp on return envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

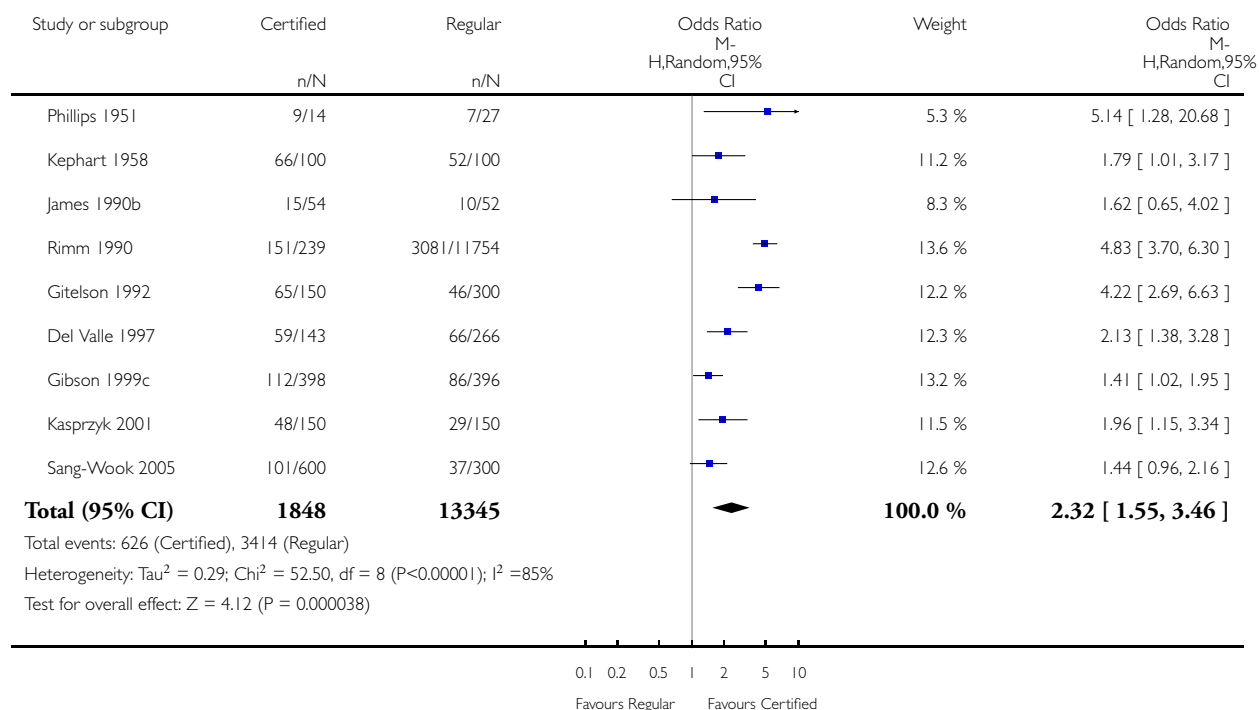


Analysis 47.1. Comparison 47 Certified/special delivery vs. regular outward mailing, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 47 Certified/special delivery vs. regular outward mailing

Outcome: 1 First response

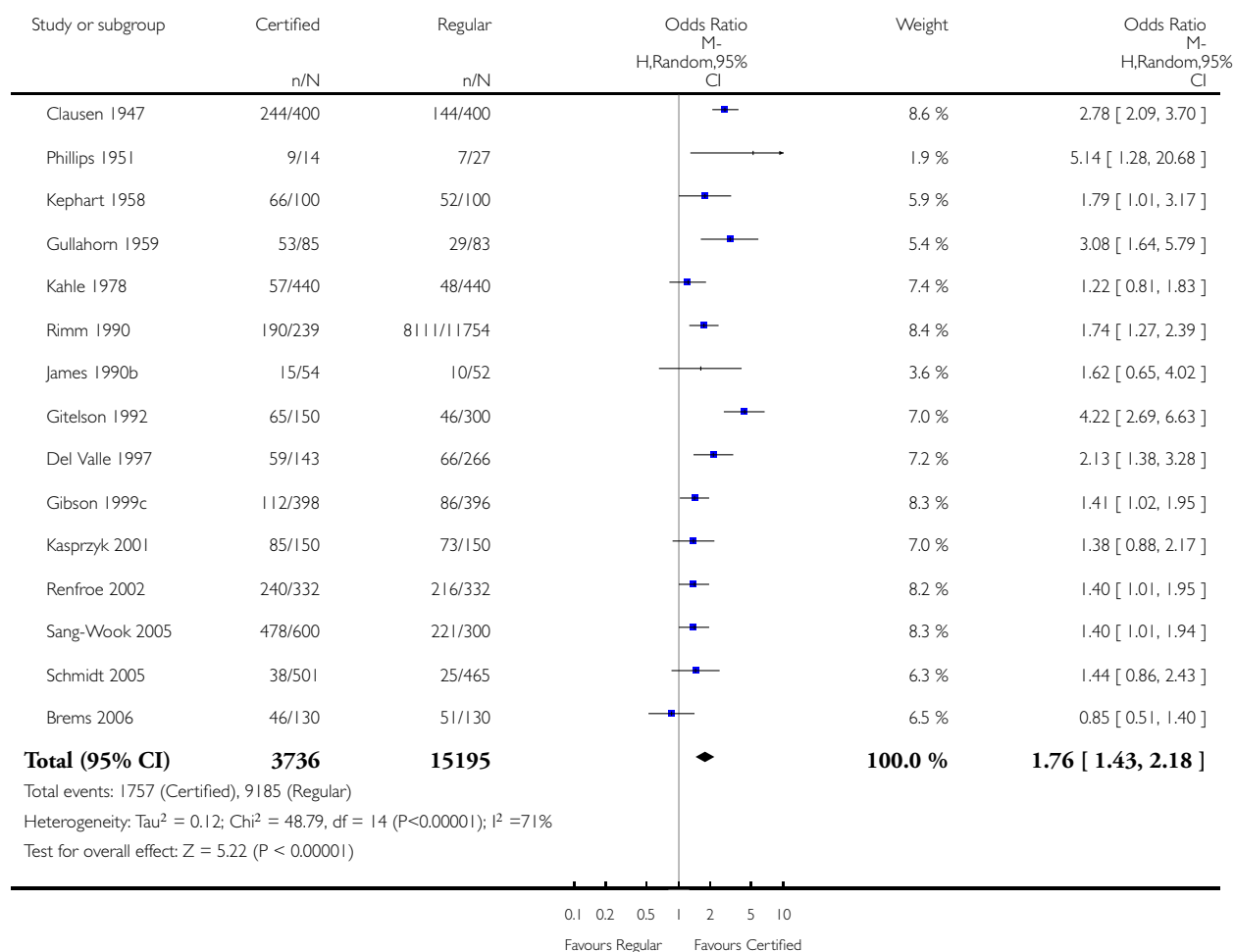


Analysis 47.2. Comparison 47 Certified/special delivery vs. regular outward mailing, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 47 Certified/special delivery vs. regular outward mailing

Outcome: 2 Final response

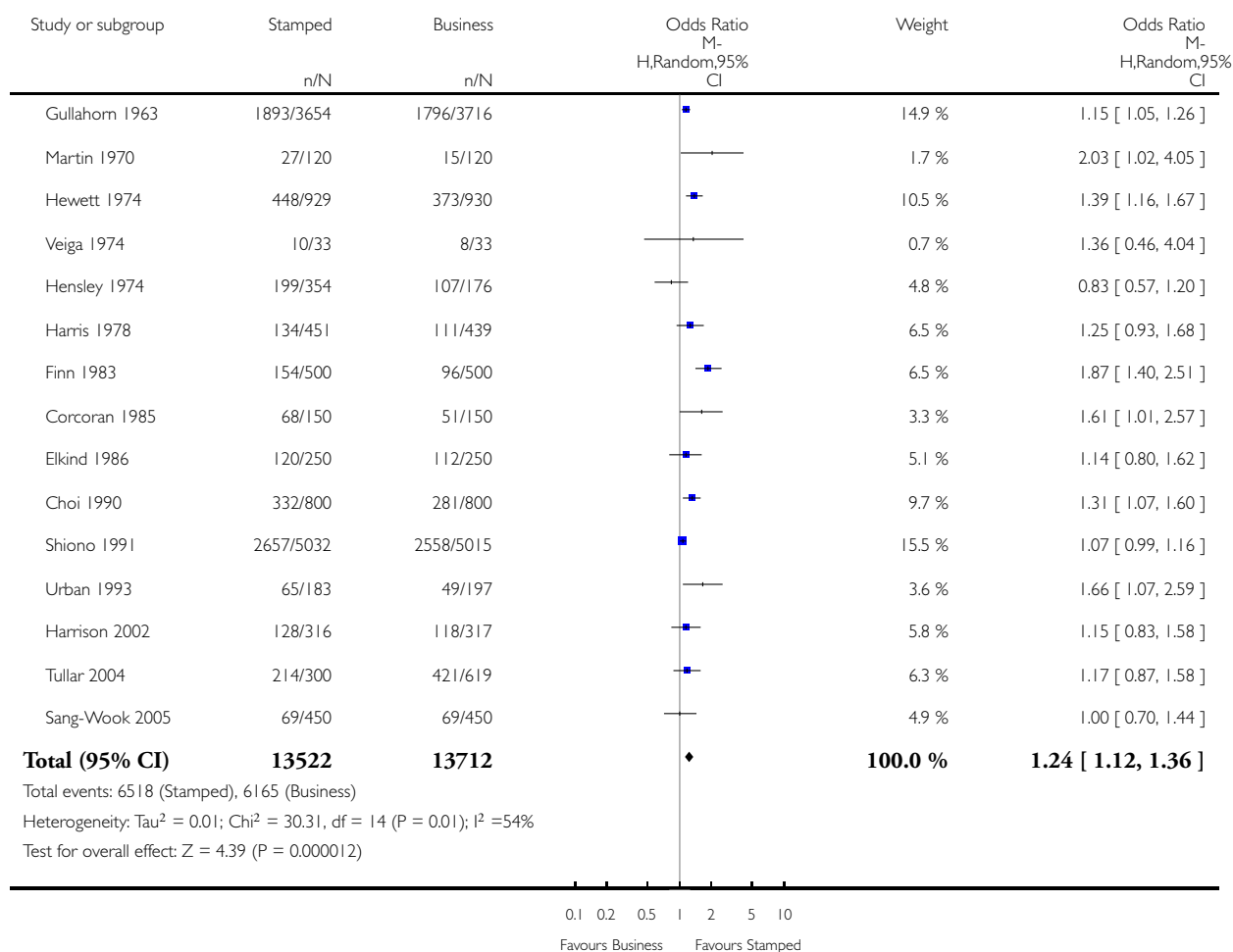


Analysis 48.1. Comparison 48 Stamped vs. business reply/franked return envelope, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 48 Stamped vs. business reply/franked return envelope

Outcome: 1 First response

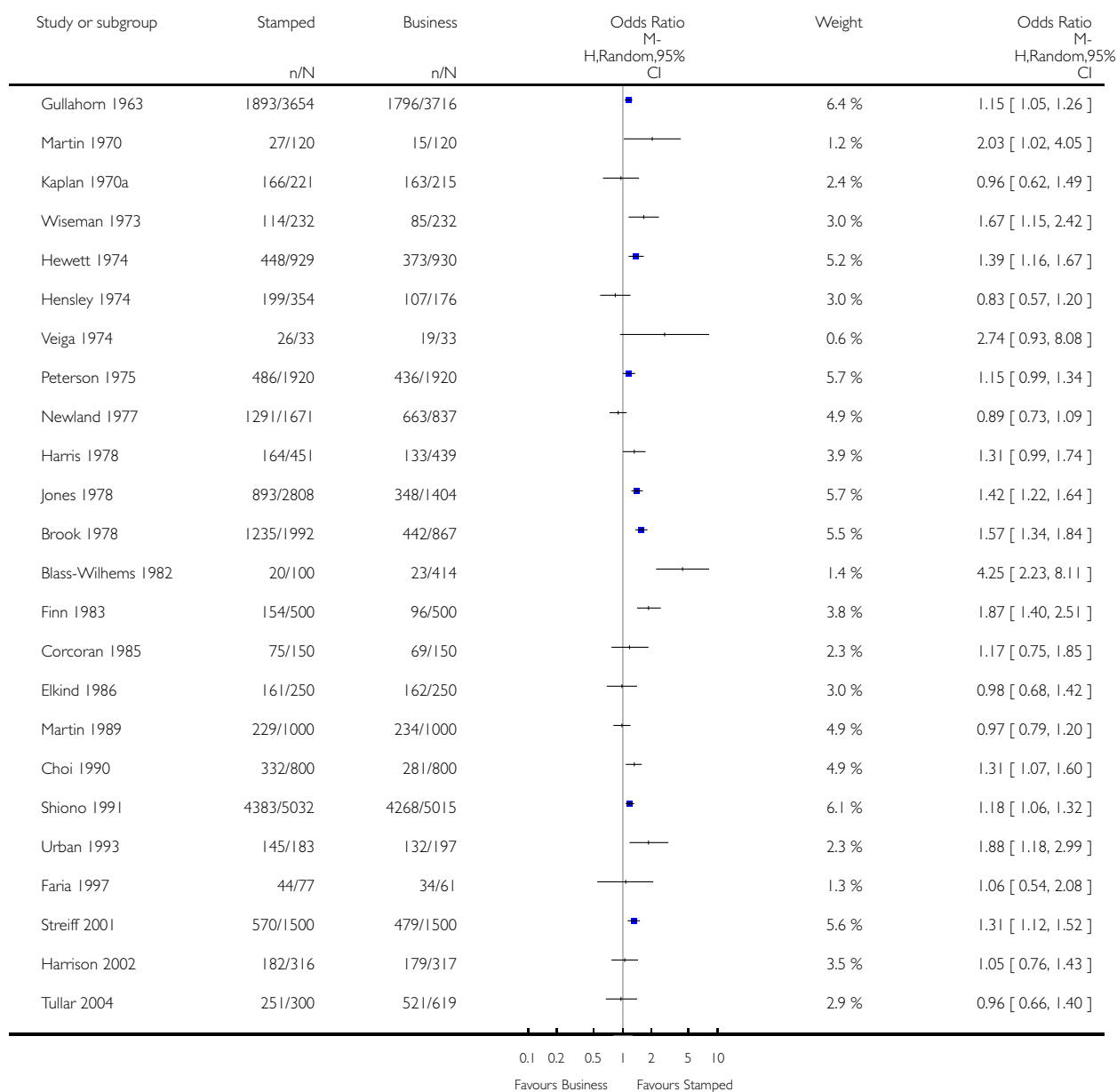


Analysis 48.2. Comparison 48 Stamped vs. business reply/franked return envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

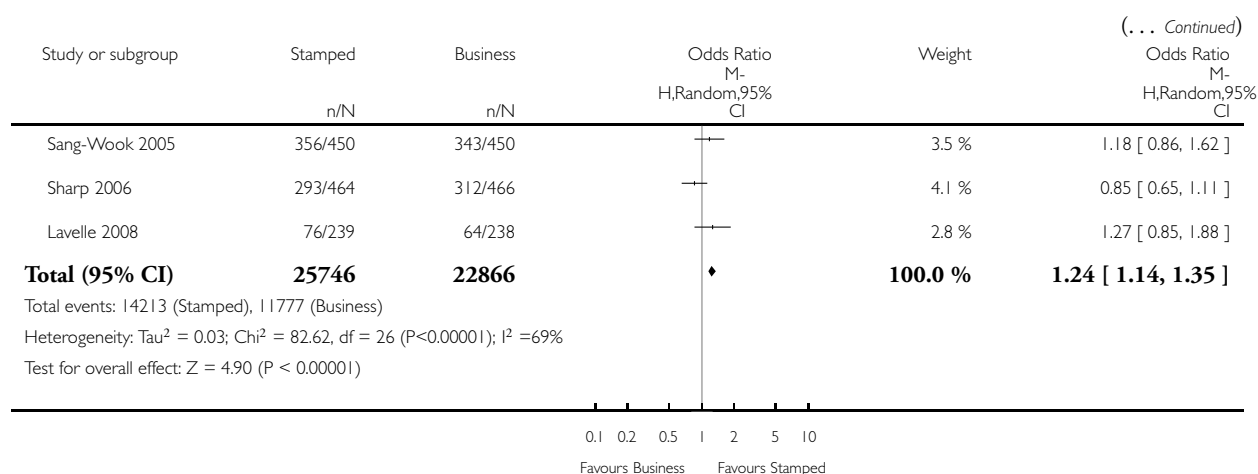
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 48 Stamped vs. business reply/franked return envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response



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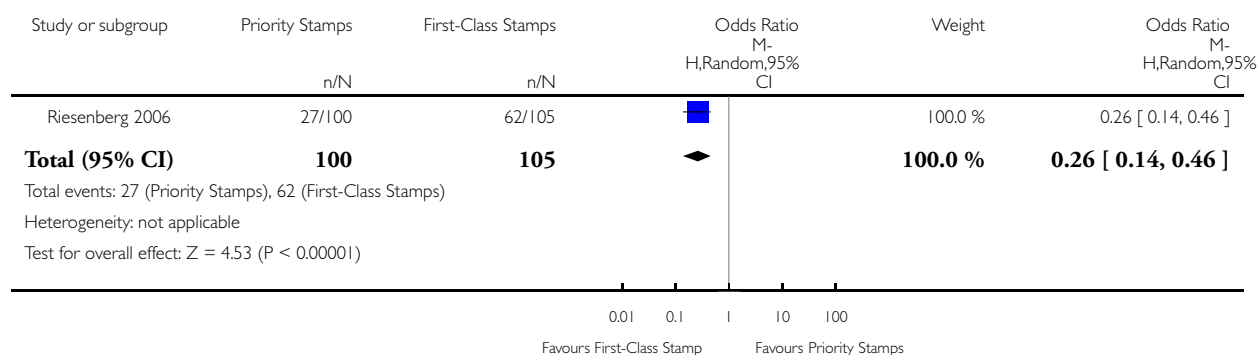


Analysis 49.2. Comparison 49 Priority stamps vs. first-class stamps on return envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 49 Priority stamps vs. first-class stamps on return envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

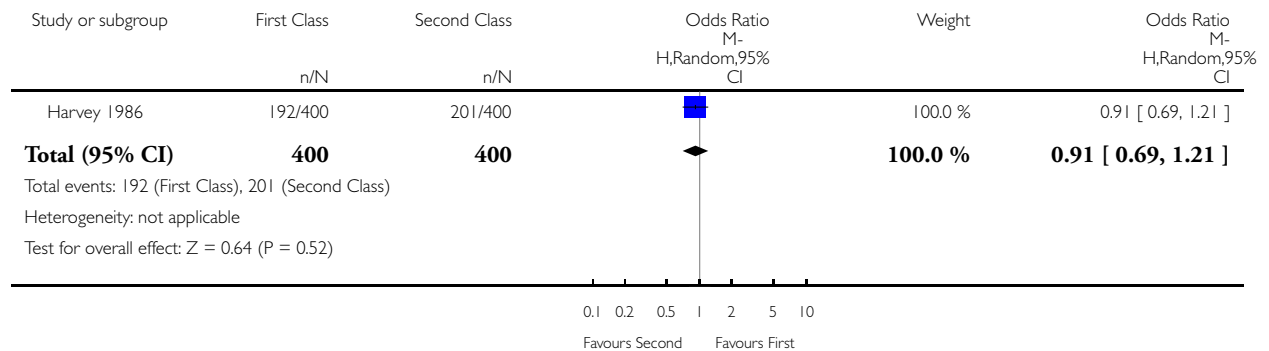


Analysis 50.2. Comparison 50 First vs. second class stamp on return envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 50 First vs. second class stamp on return envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

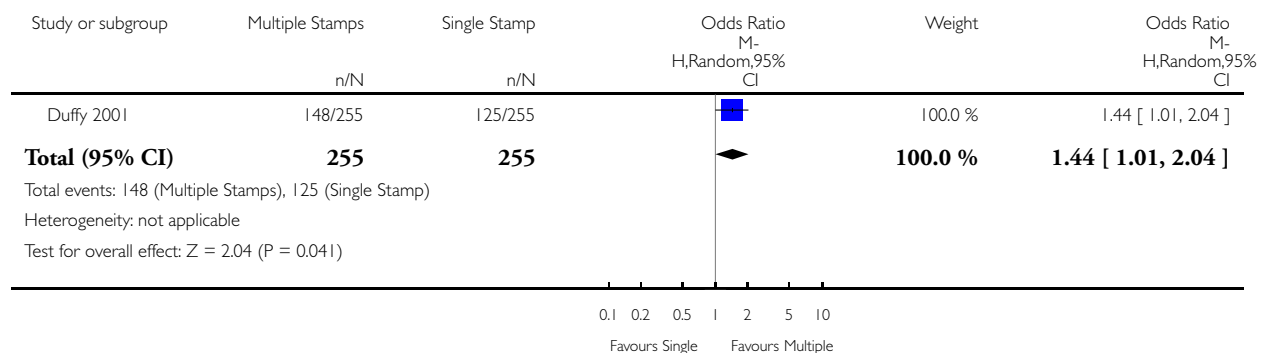


Analysis 51.2. Comparison 51 Multiple stamps vs. single stamp on return envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 51 Multiple stamps vs. single stamp on return envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

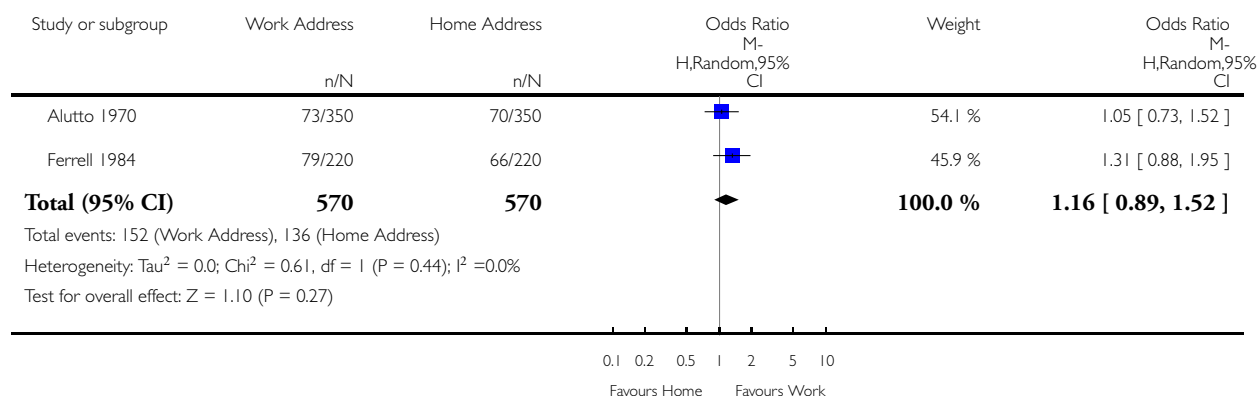


Analysis 52.1. Comparison 52 Questionnaire sent to work vs. home address, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 52 Questionnaire sent to work vs. home address

Outcome: 1 First response

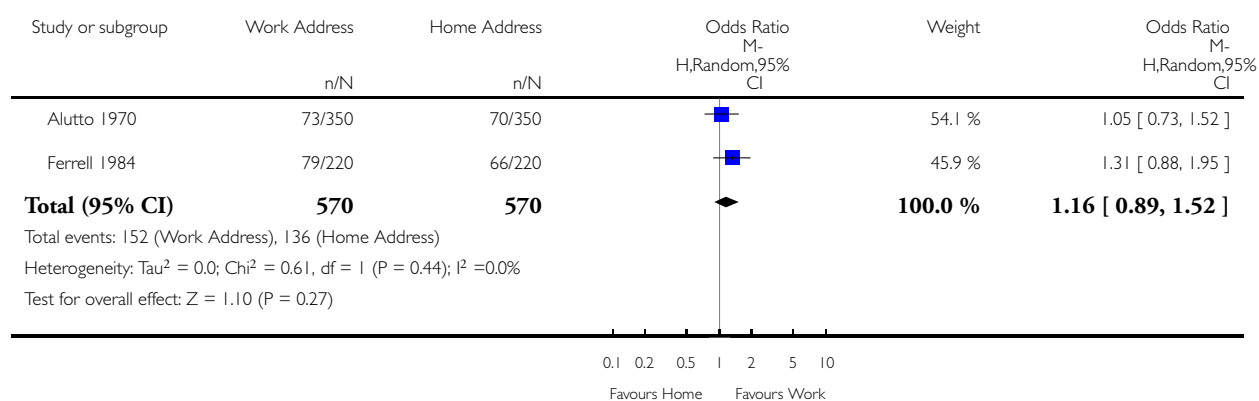


Analysis 52.2. Comparison 52 Questionnaire sent to work vs. home address, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 52 Questionnaire sent to work vs. home address

Outcome: 2 Final response

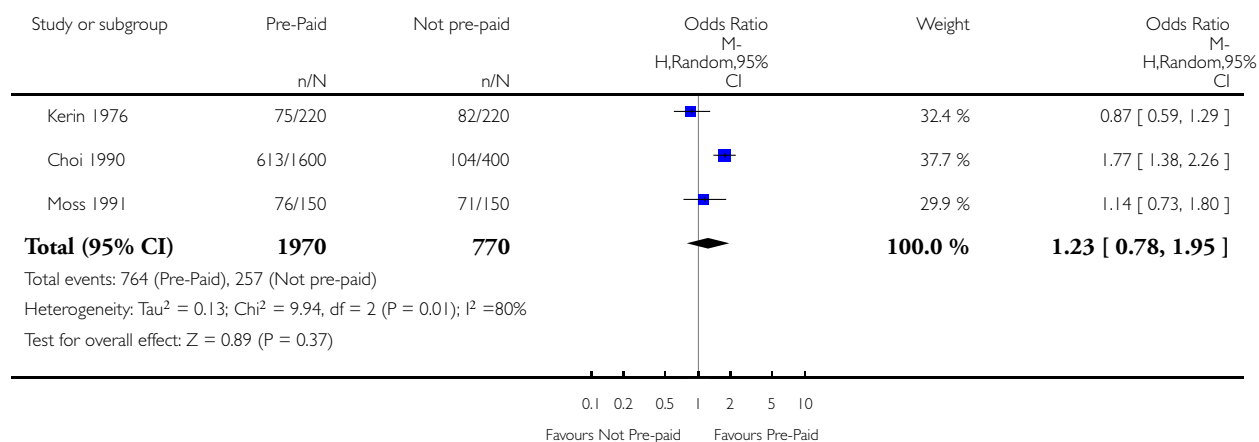


Analysis 53.1. Comparison 53 Pre-paid return envelope vs. not pre-paid, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 53 Pre-paid return envelope vs. not pre-paid

Outcome: 1 First response

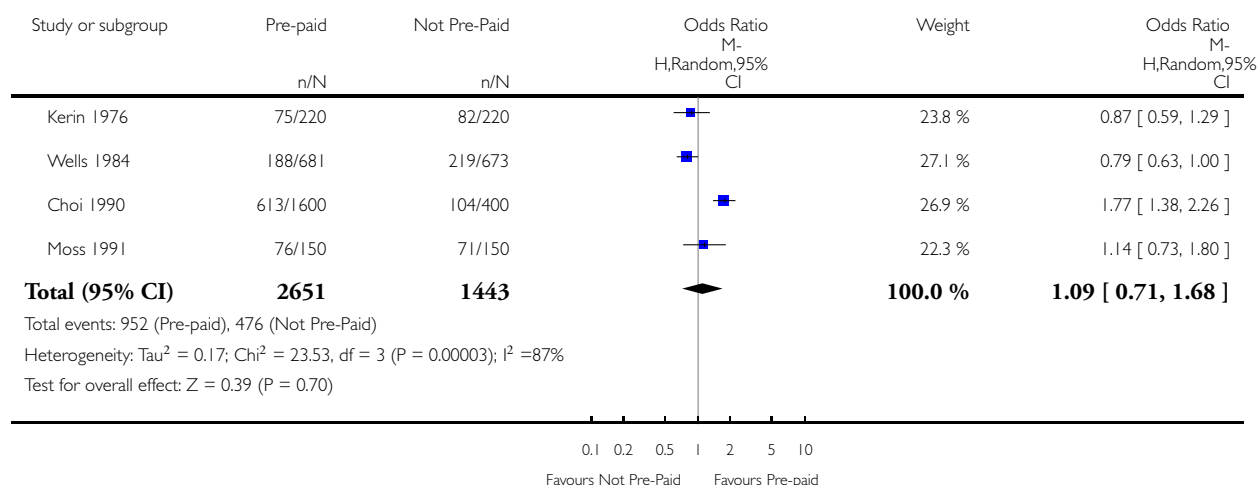


Analysis 53.2. Comparison 53 Pre-paid return envelope vs. not pre-paid, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 53 Pre-paid return envelope vs. not pre-paid

Outcome: 2 Final response

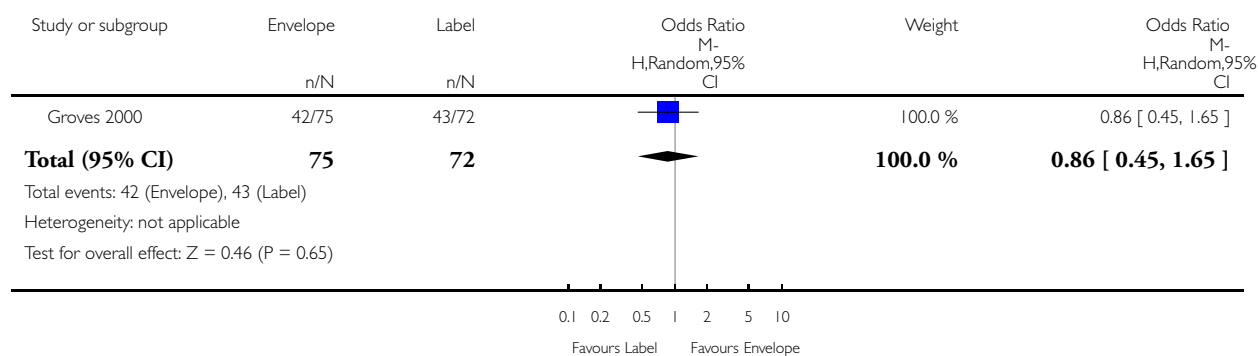


Analysis 54.2. Comparison 54 Stamped addressed return envelope vs. address label only included, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 54 Stamped addressed return envelope vs. address label only included

Outcome: 2 Final response

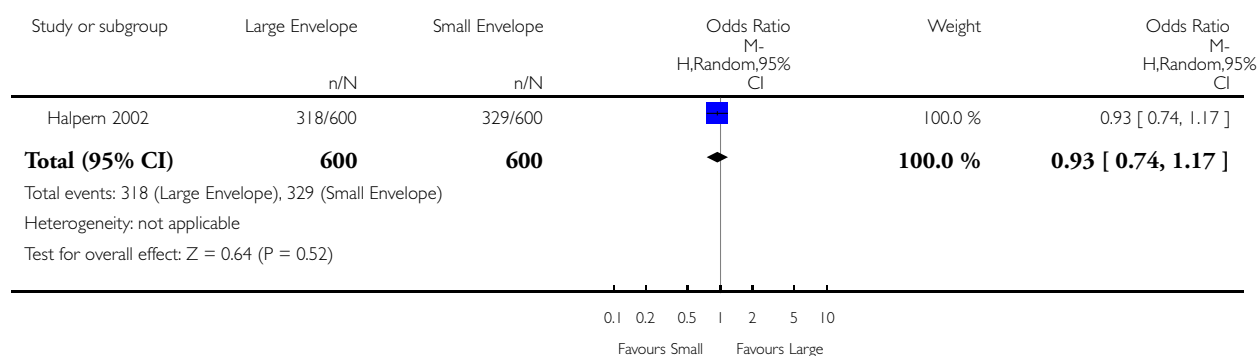


Analysis 55.2. Comparison 55 Q'aire mailed in large vs. standard/small envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 55 Q'aire mailed in large vs. standard/small envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

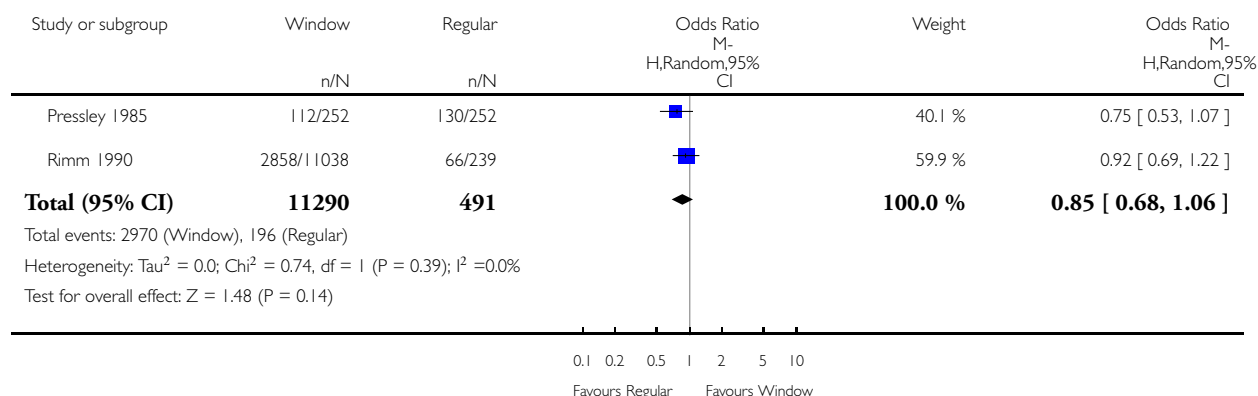


Analysis 56.1. Comparison 56 Window vs. regular envelope, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 56 Window vs. regular envelope

Outcome: 1 First response

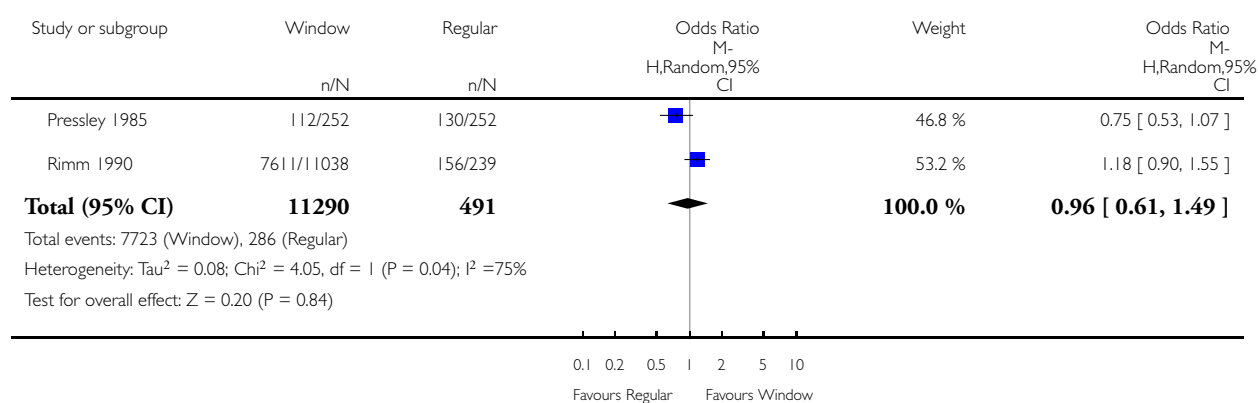


Analysis 56.2. Comparison 56 Window vs. regular envelope, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 56 Window vs. regular envelope

Outcome: 2 Final response

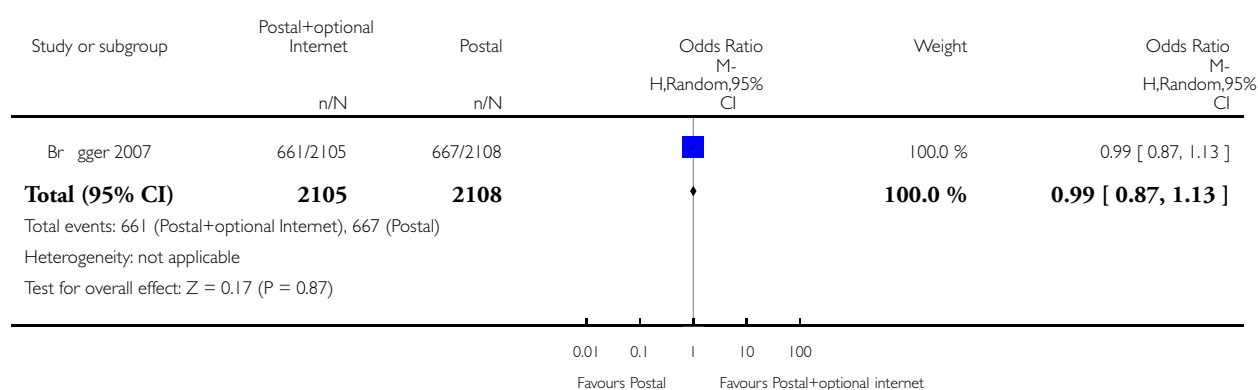


Analysis 57.1. Comparison 57 Postal + optional Internet response vs. only postal response, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 57 Postal + optional Internet response vs. only postal response

Outcome: 1 First response

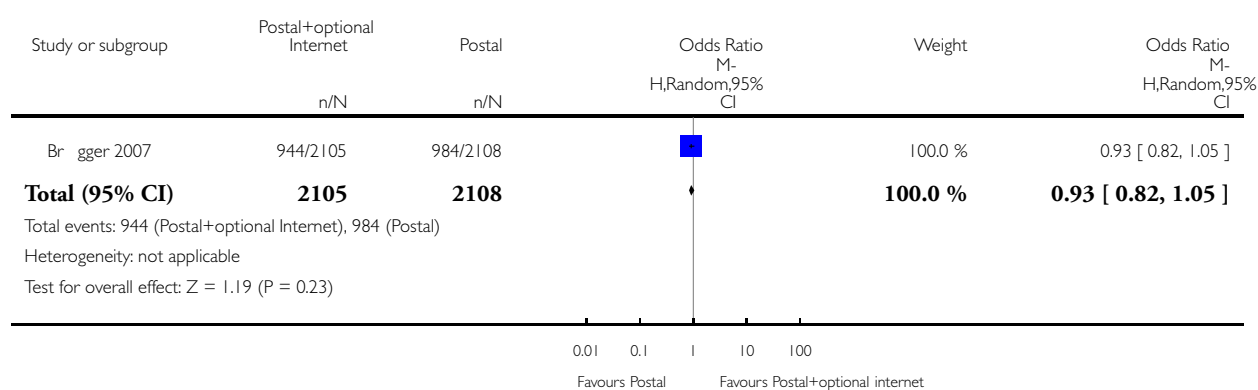


Analysis 57.2. Comparison 57 Postal + optional Internet response vs. only postal response, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 57 Postal + optional Internet response vs. only postal response

Outcome: 2 Final response

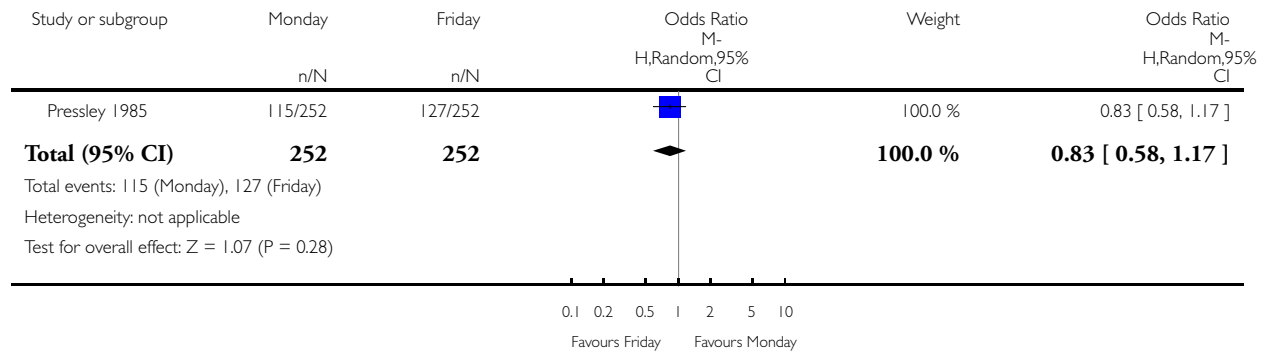


Analysis 58.1. Comparison 58 Questionnaire mailed on Monday vs. Friday, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 58 Questionnaire mailed on Monday vs. Friday

Outcome: 1 First response

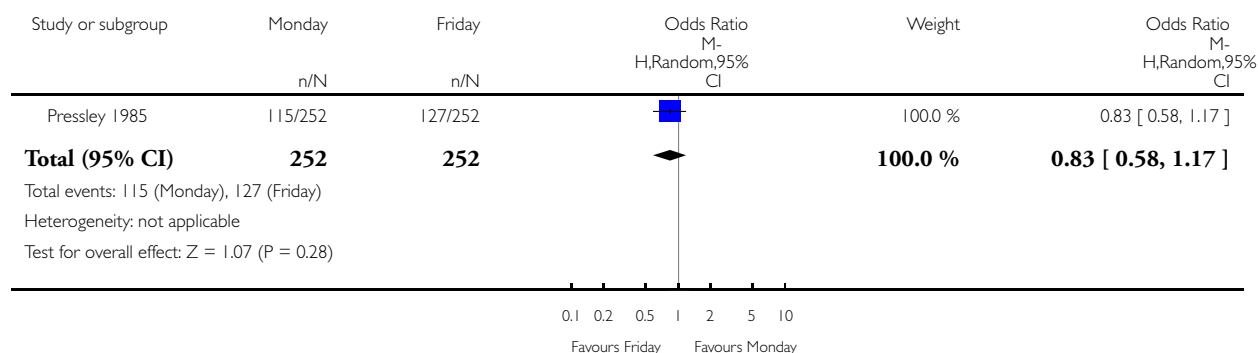


Analysis 58.2. Comparison 58 Questionnaire mailed on Monday vs. Friday, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 58 Questionnaire mailed on Monday vs. Friday

Outcome: 2 Final response

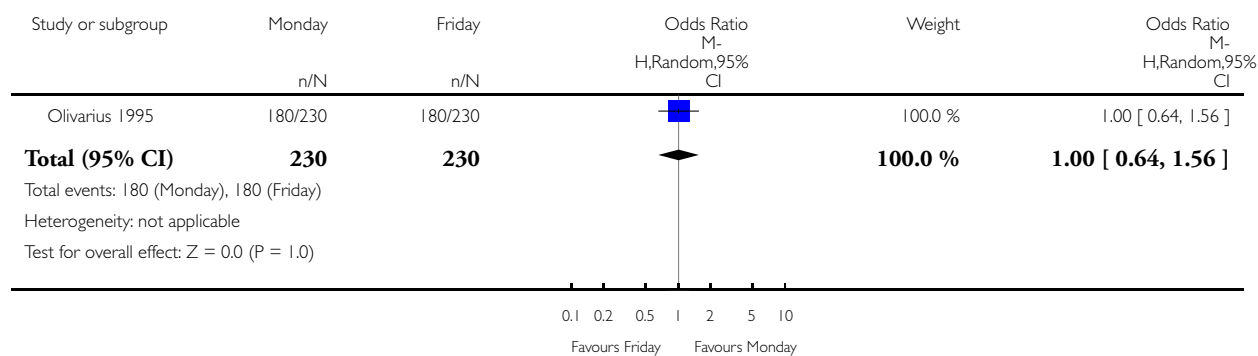


Analysis 59.2. Comparison 59 Questionnaire received on Monday vs. Friday, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 59 Questionnaire received on Monday vs. Friday

Outcome: 2 Final response

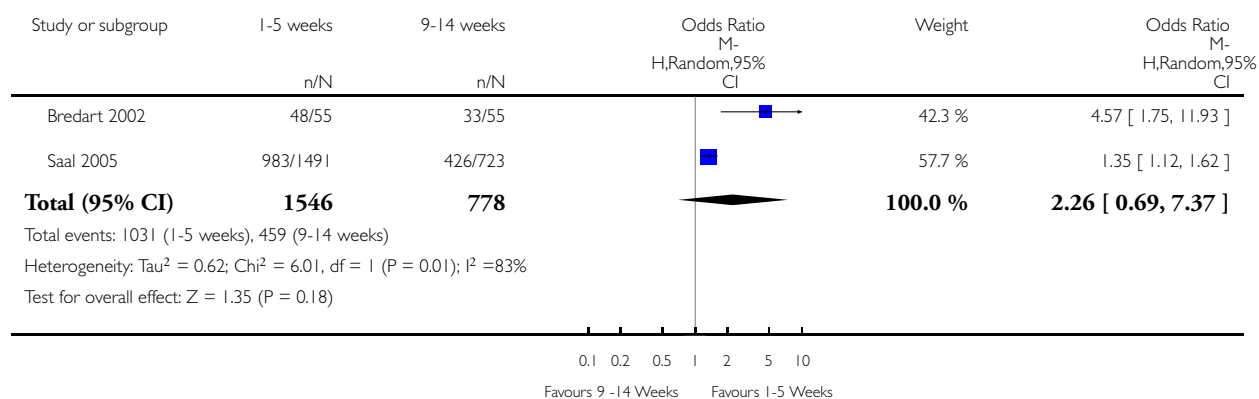


Analysis 60.2. Comparison 60 Q'aire sent 1-5 weeks vs. 9-14 weeks after hospital discharge, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 60 Q'aire sent 1-5 weeks vs. 9-14 weeks after hospital discharge

Outcome: 2 Final response

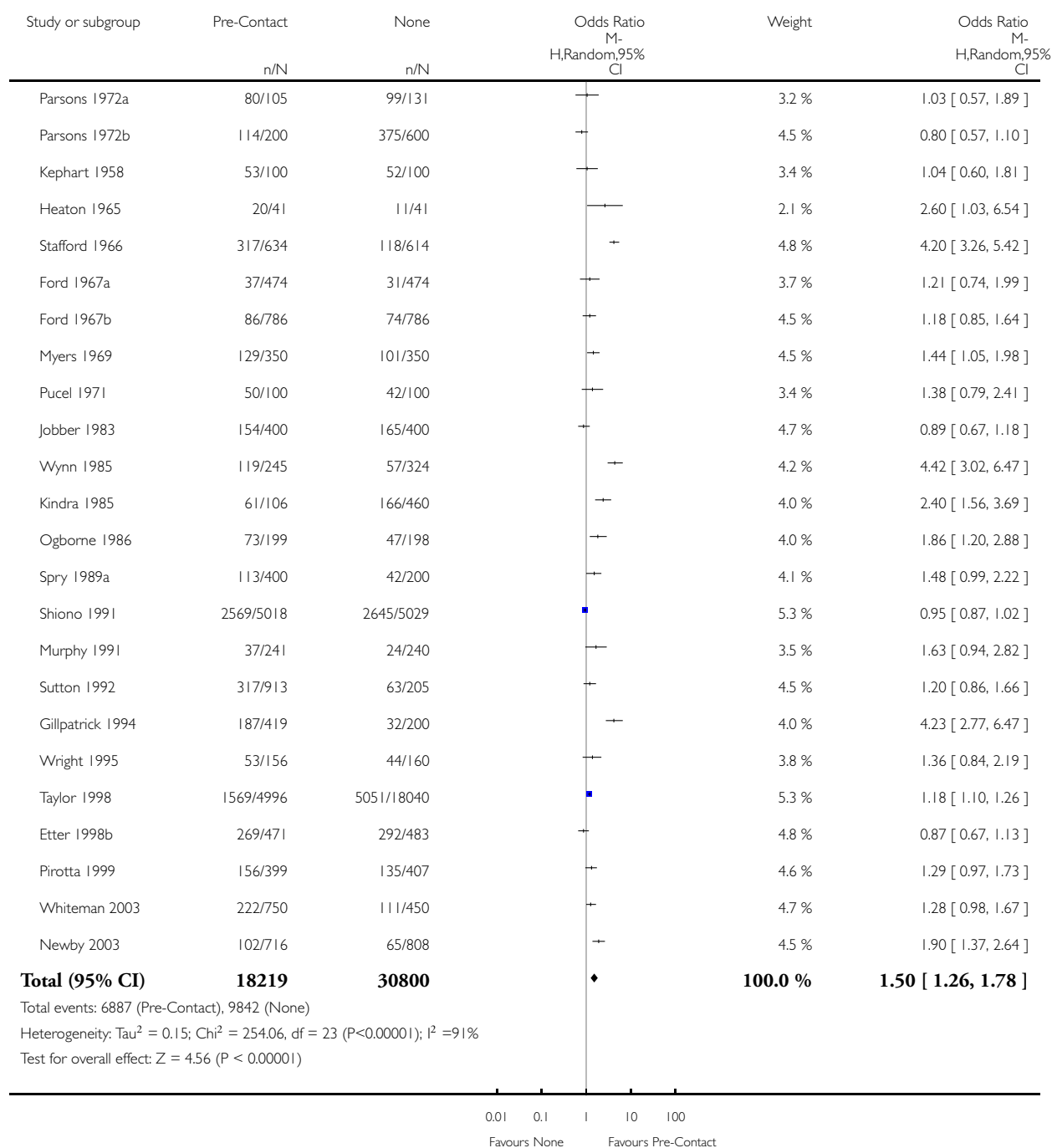


Analysis 61.1. Comparison 61 Pre-contact vs. no pre-contact, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 61 Pre-contact vs. no pre-contact

Outcome: 1 First response

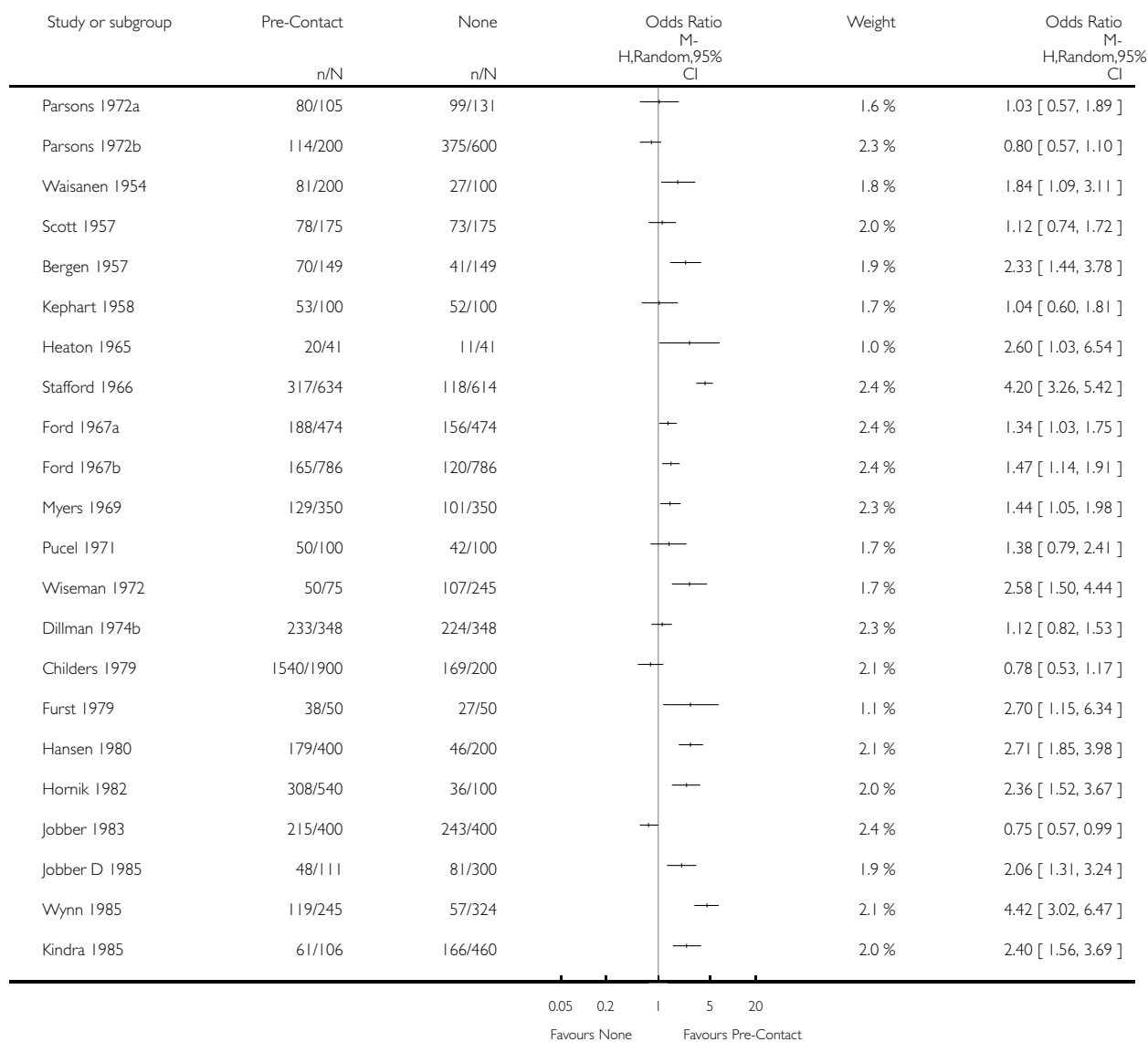


Analysis 61.2. Comparison 61 Pre-contact vs. no pre-contact, Outcome 2 Final response.

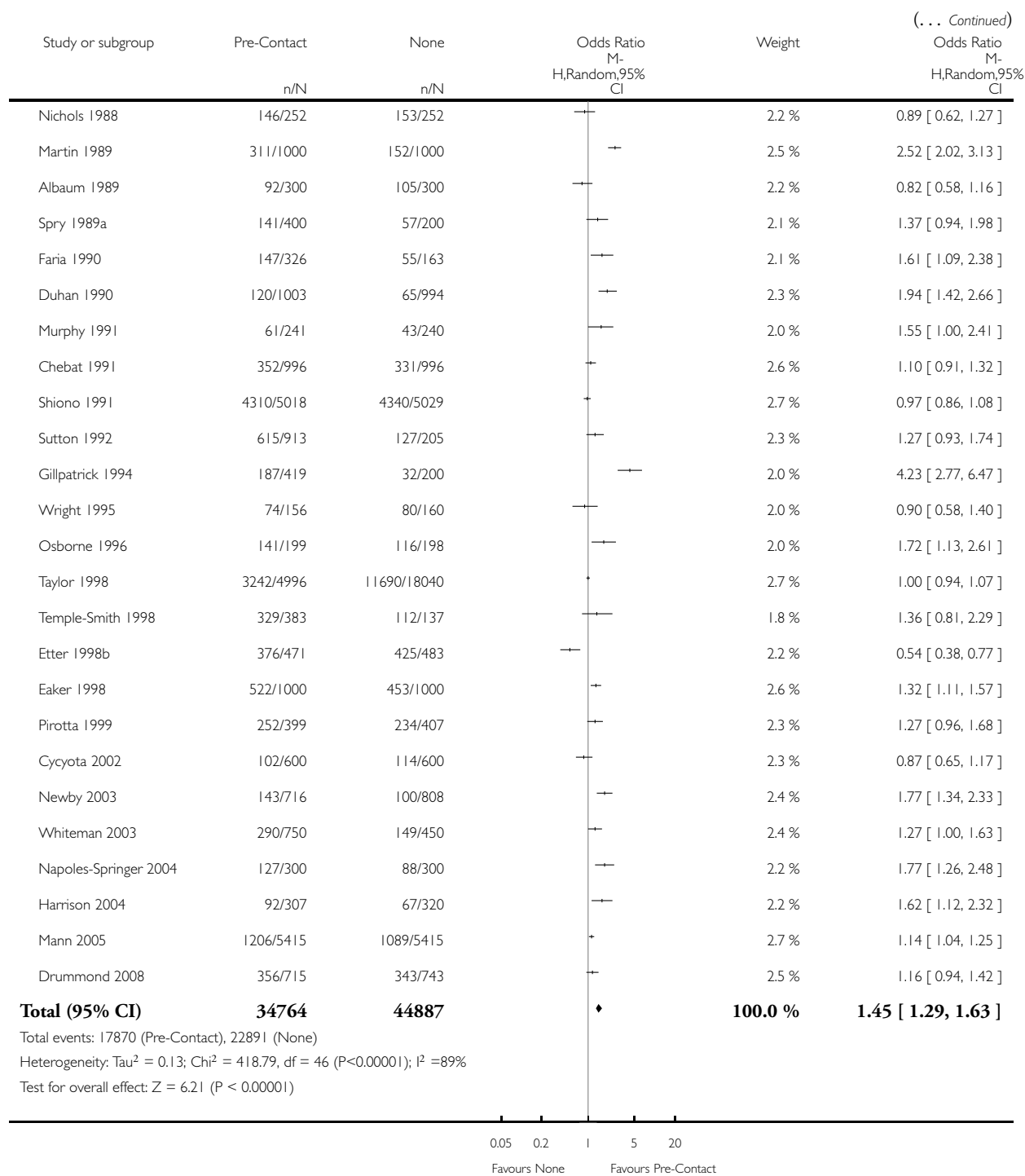
Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 61 Pre-contact vs. no pre-contact

Outcome: 2 Final response



(Continued ...)

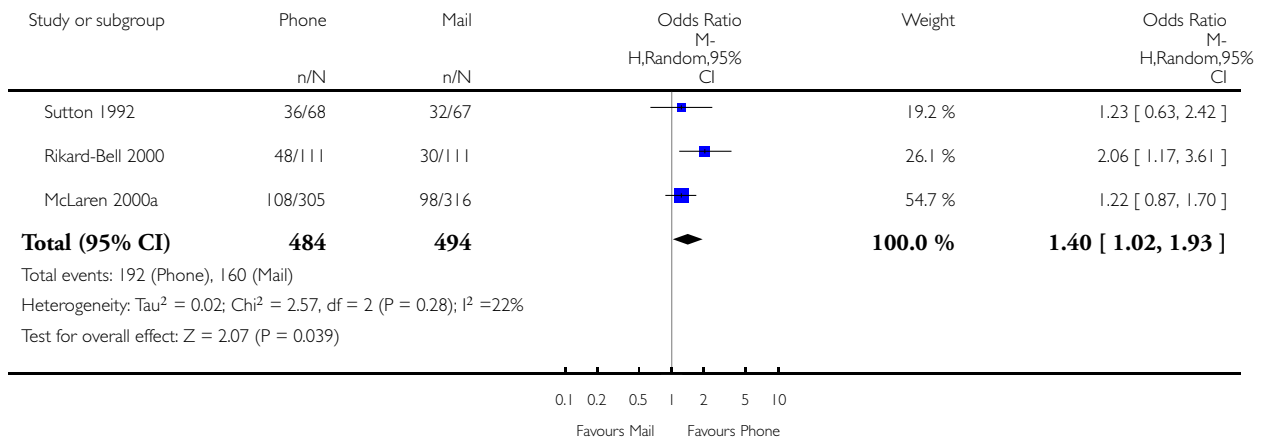


Analysis 62.1. Comparison 62 Pre-contact by phone vs. mail, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 62 Pre-contact by phone vs. mail

Outcome: 1 First response

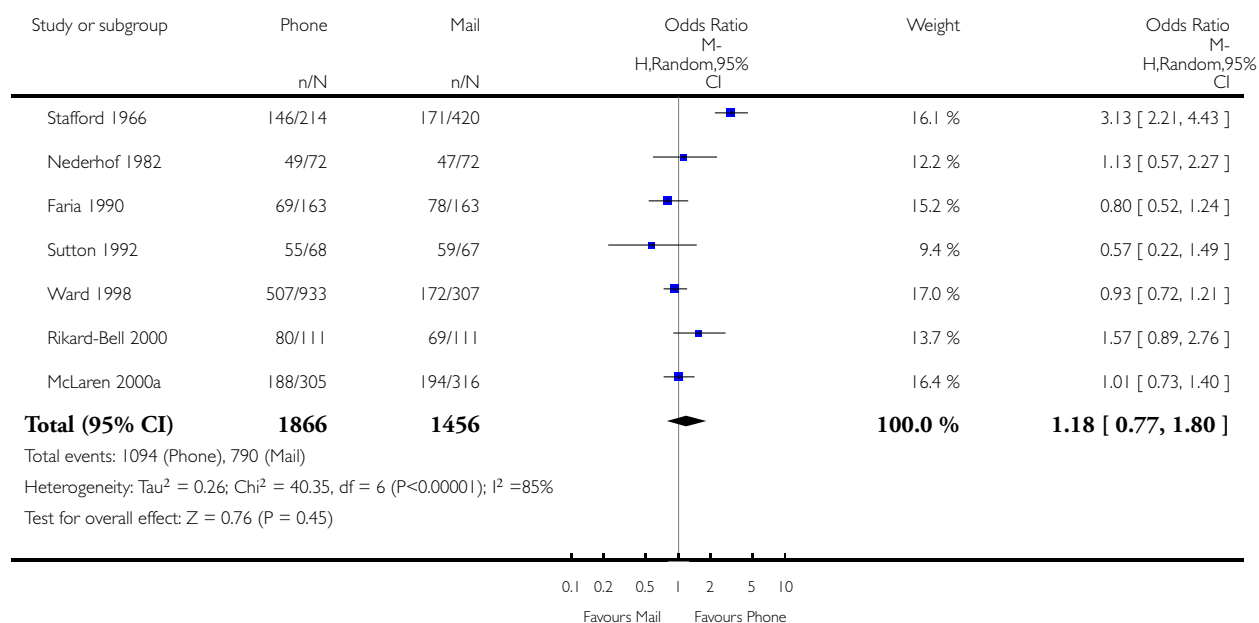


Analysis 62.2. Comparison 62 Pre-contact by phone vs. mail, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 62 Pre-contact by phone vs. mail

Outcome: 2 Final response

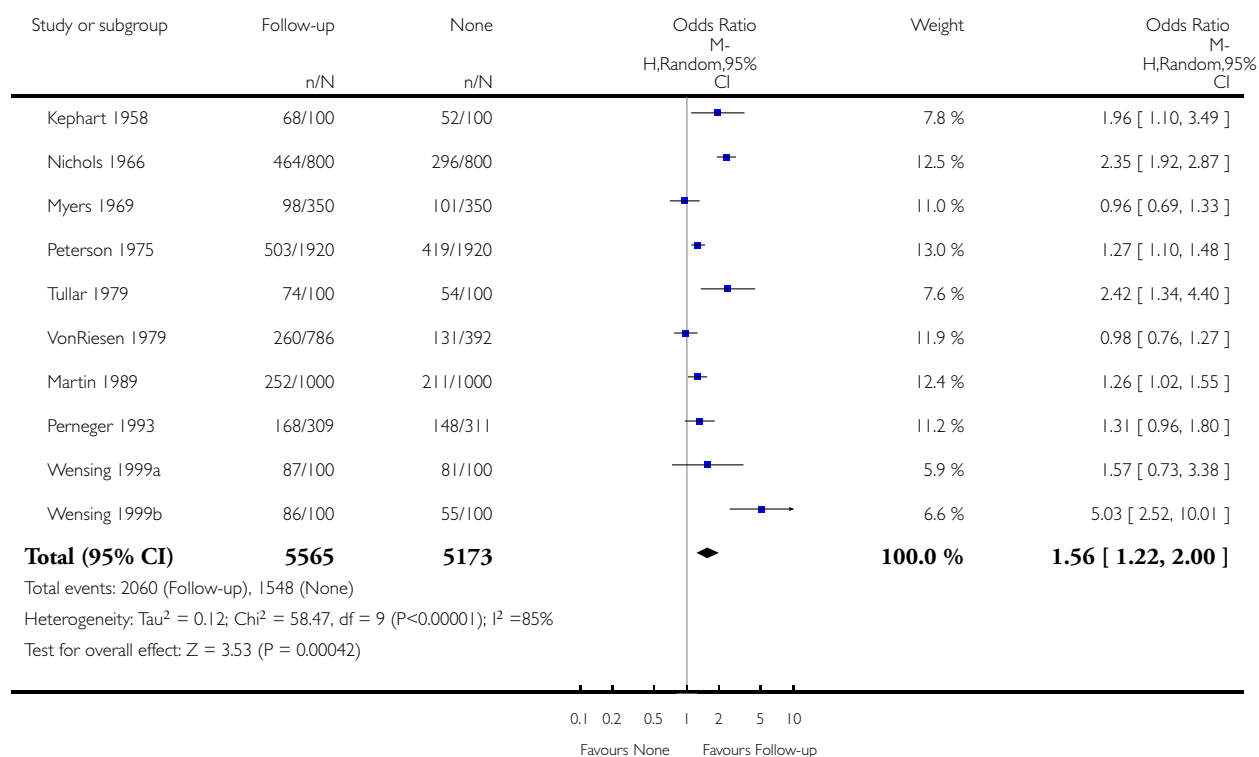


Analysis 63.1. Comparison 63 Follow up vs. no follow up, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 63 Follow up vs. no follow up

Outcome: 1 First response

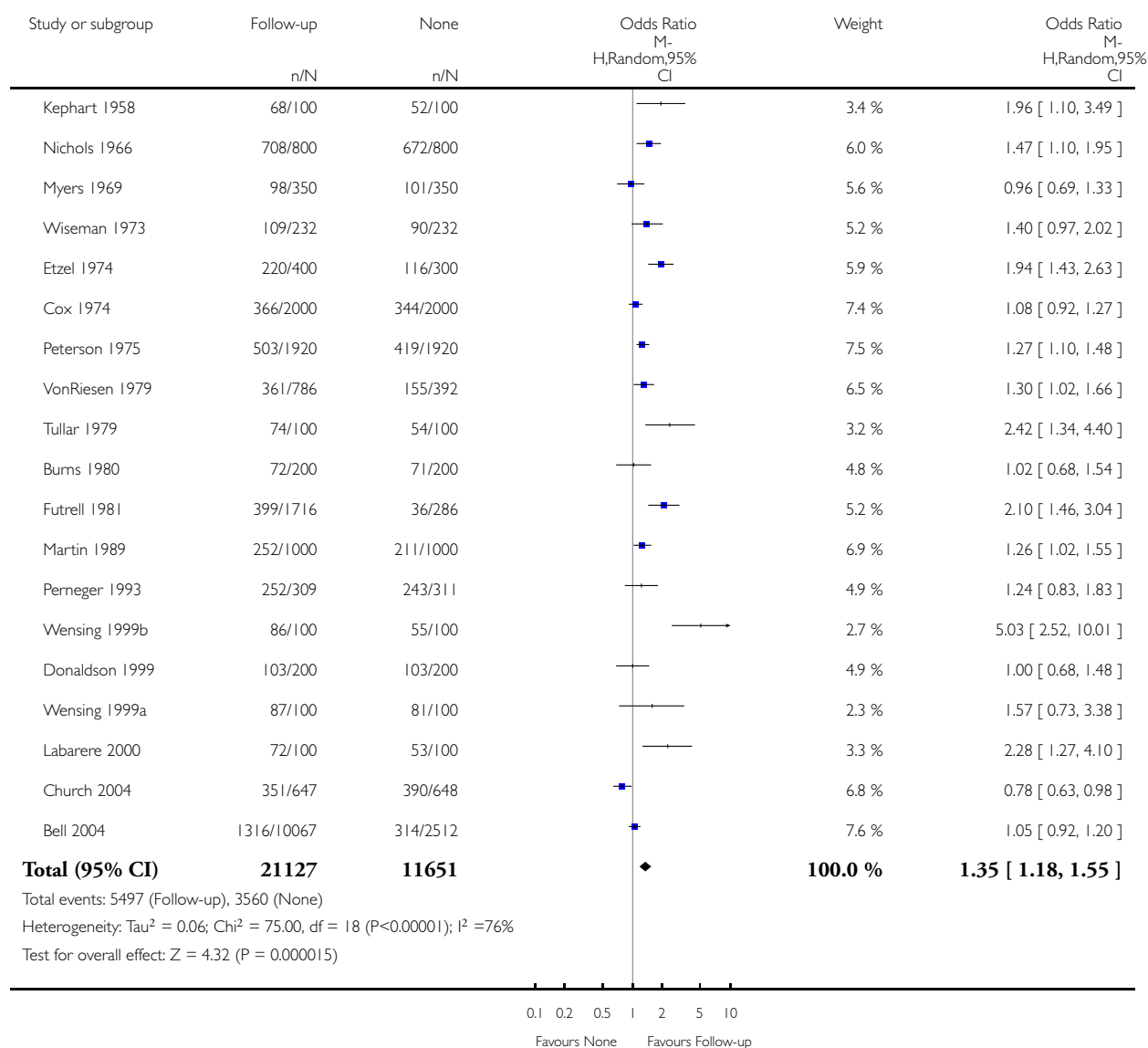


Analysis 63.2. Comparison 63 Follow up vs. no follow up, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 63 Follow up vs. no follow up

Outcome: 2 Final response

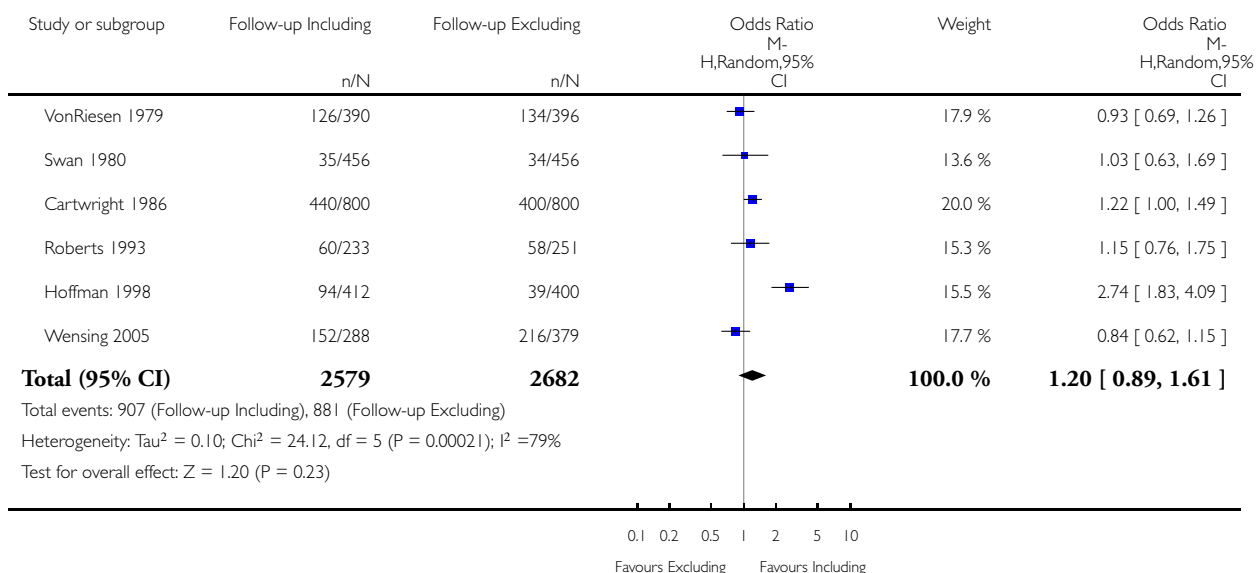


Analysis 64.1. Comparison 64 Postal follow-up including vs. excluding q'aire, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 64 Postal follow-up including vs. excluding q'aire

Outcome: 1 First response

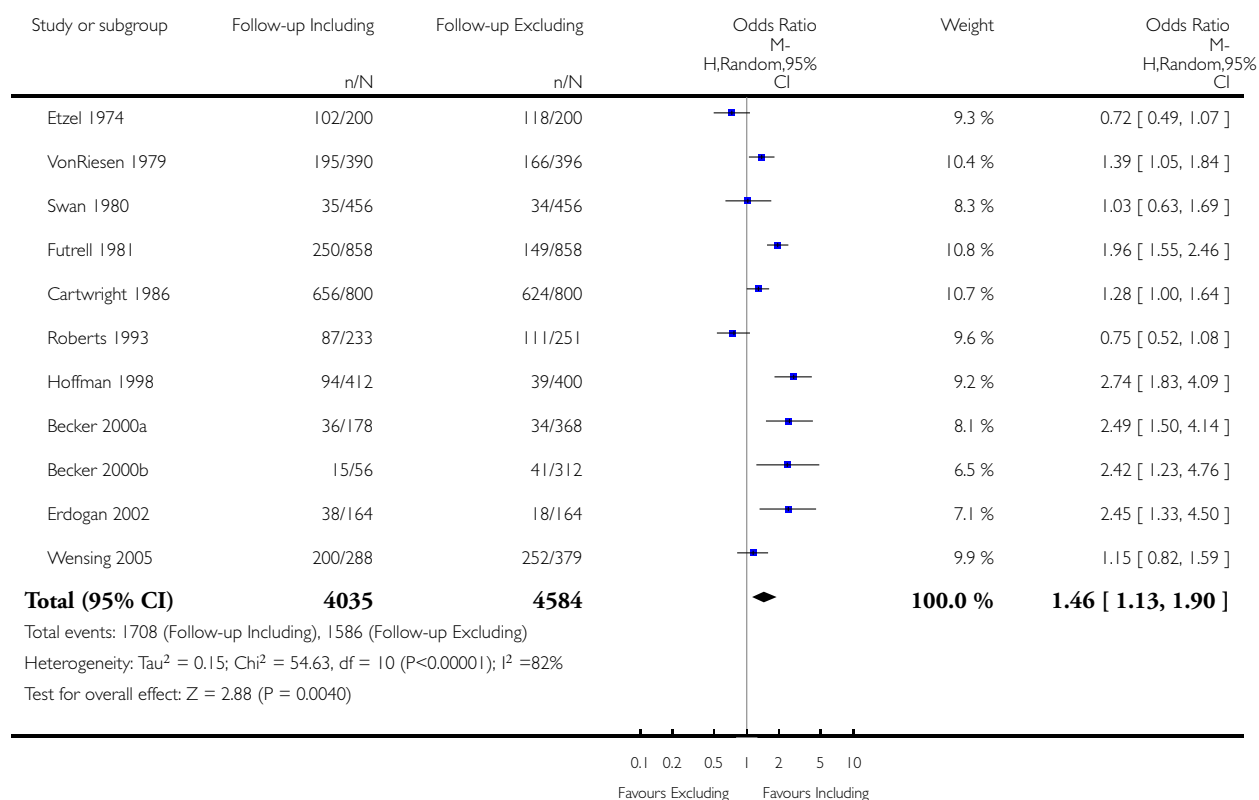


Analysis 64.2. Comparison 64 Postal follow-up including vs. excluding q'aire, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 64 Postal follow-up including vs. excluding q'aire

Outcome: 2 Final response

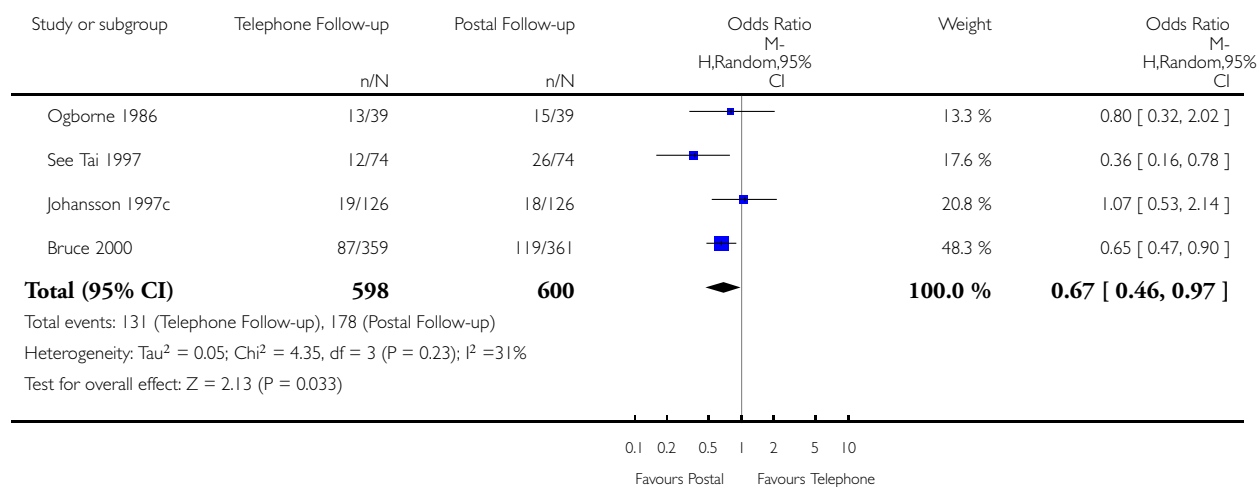


Analysis 65.1. Comparison 65 Follow up by phone vs. mail, Outcome 1 First Response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 65 Follow up by phone vs. mail

Outcome: 1 First Response

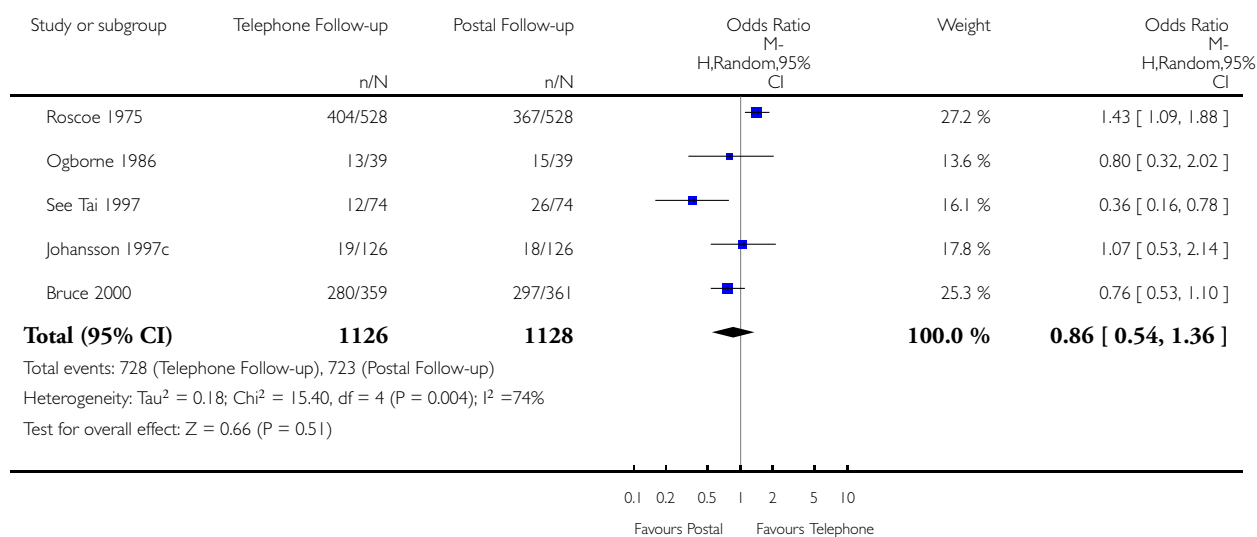


Analysis 65.2. Comparison 65 Follow up by phone vs. mail, Outcome 2 Final Response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 65 Follow up by phone vs. mail

Outcome: 2 Final Response

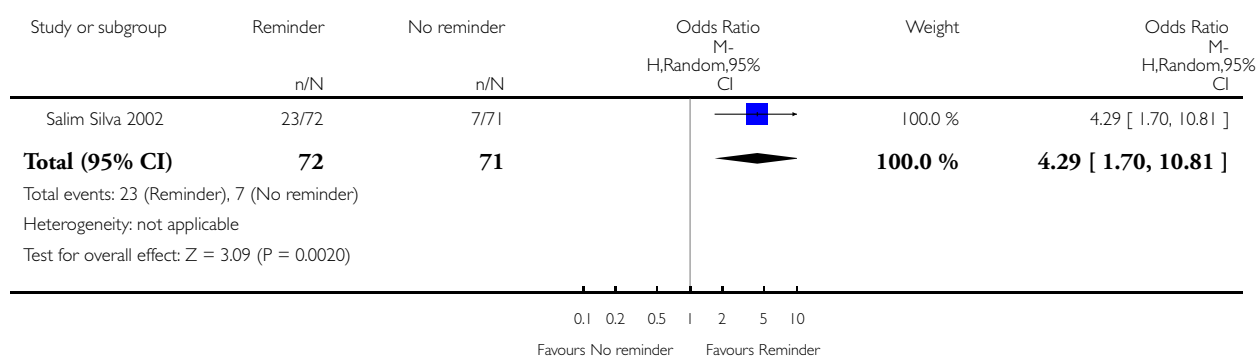


Analysis 66.1. Comparison 66 Telephone reminder vs. no reminder, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 66 Telephone reminder vs. no reminder

Outcome: 1 First response

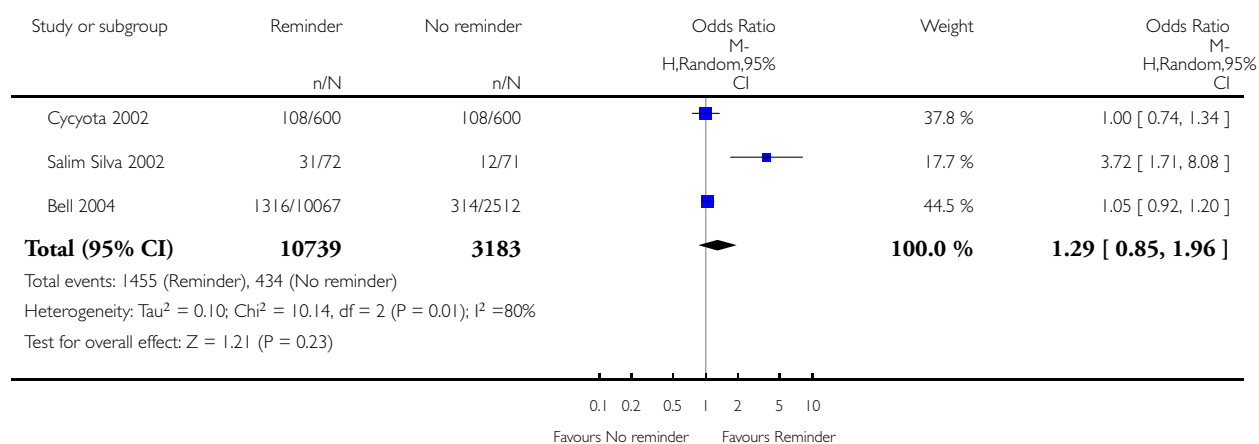


Analysis 66.2. Comparison 66 Telephone reminder vs. no reminder, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 66 Telephone reminder vs. no reminder

Outcome: 2 Final response

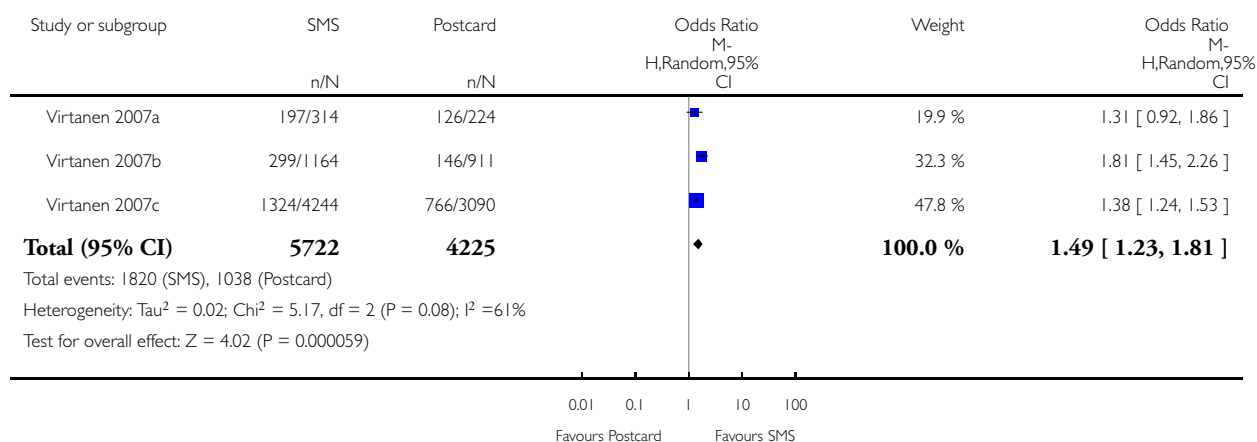


Analysis 67.2. Comparison 67 SMS vs. postcard reminder, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 67 SMS vs. postcard reminder

Outcome: 2 Final response

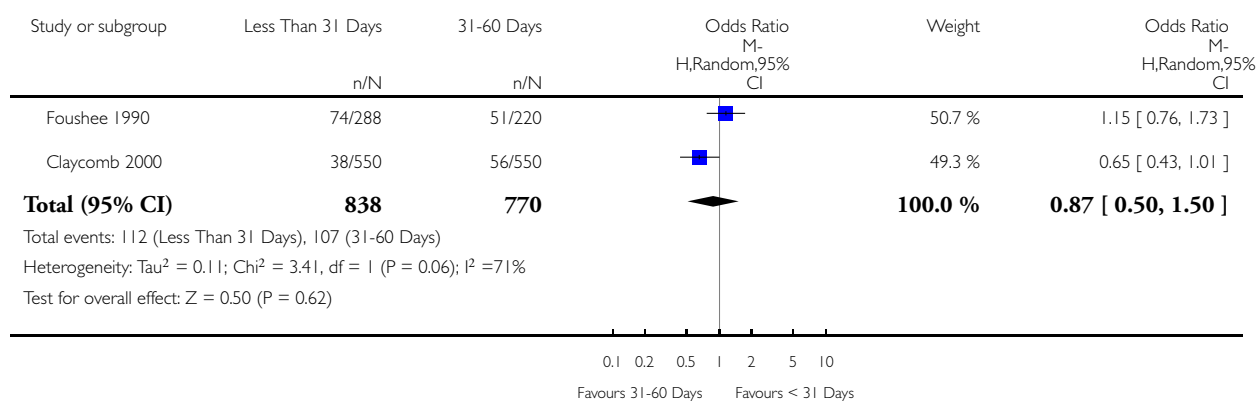


Analysis 68.1. Comparison 68 Follow-up interval < 31 days vs. 31-60 days, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 68 Follow-up interval < 31 days vs. 31-60 days

Outcome: 1 First response

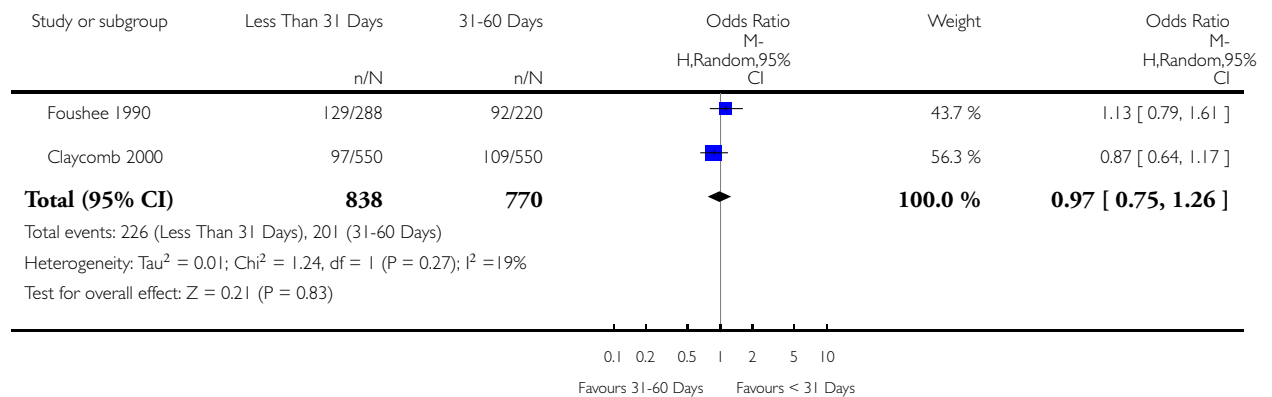


Analysis 68.2. Comparison 68 Follow-up interval < 31 days vs. 31-60 days, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 68 Follow-up interval < 31 days vs. 31-60 days

Outcome: 2 Final response

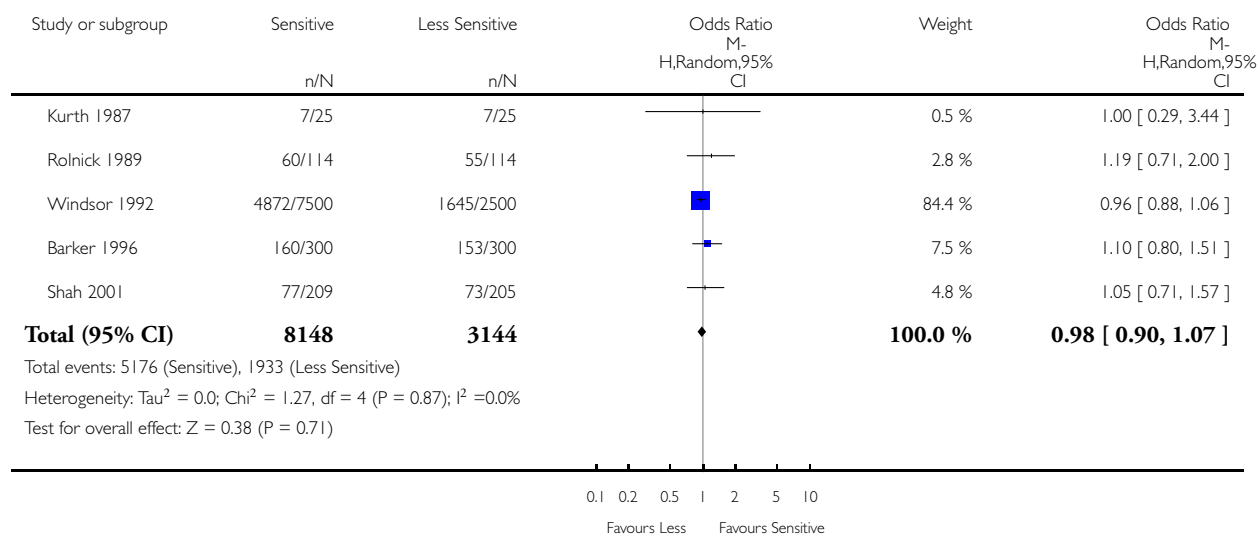


Analysis 69.1. Comparison 69 Sensitive questions vs. no/fewer/less sensitive questions asked, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 69 Sensitive questions vs. no/fewer/less sensitive questions asked

Outcome: 1 First response

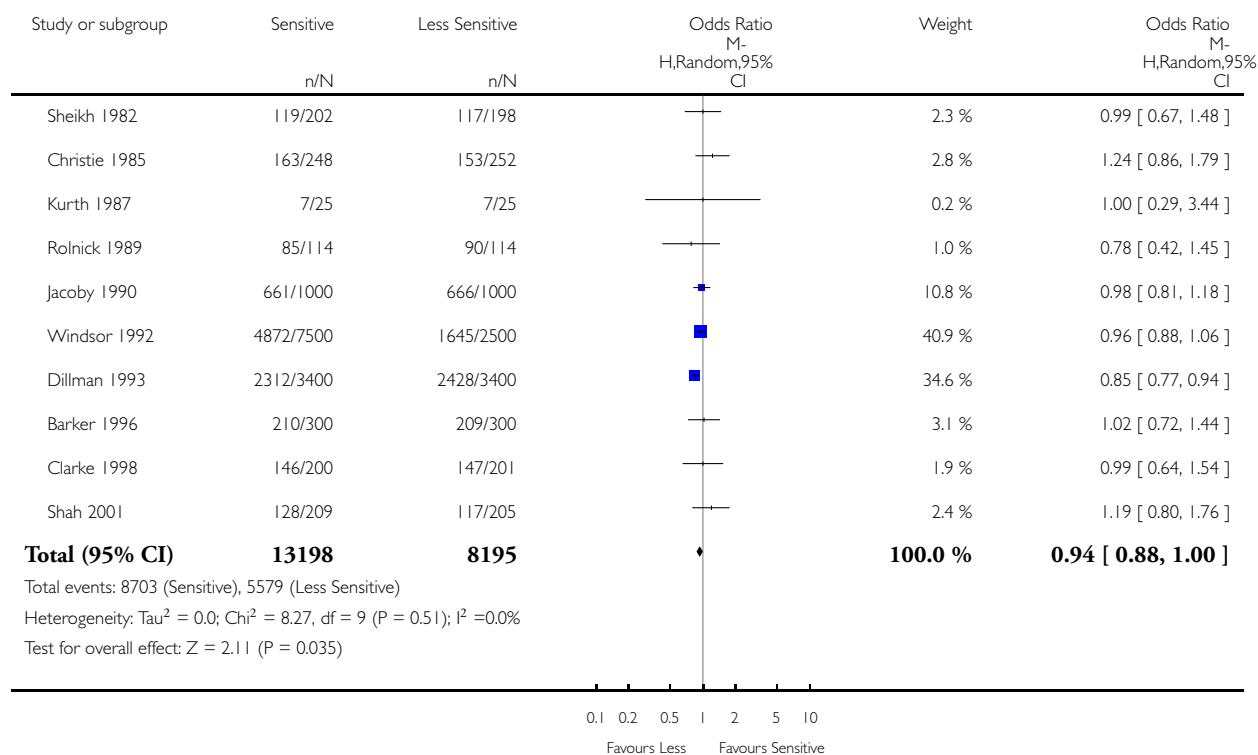


Analysis 69.2. Comparison 69 Sensitive questions vs. no/fewer/less sensitive questions asked, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 69 Sensitive questions vs. no/fewer/less sensitive questions asked

Outcome: 2 Final response

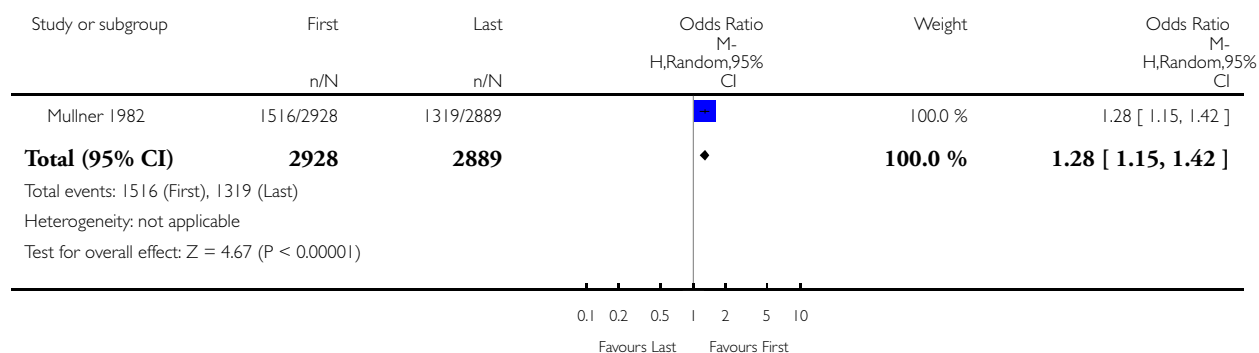


Analysis 70.1. Comparison 70 More relevant questions first vs. last, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 70 More relevant questions first vs. last

Outcome: 1 First response

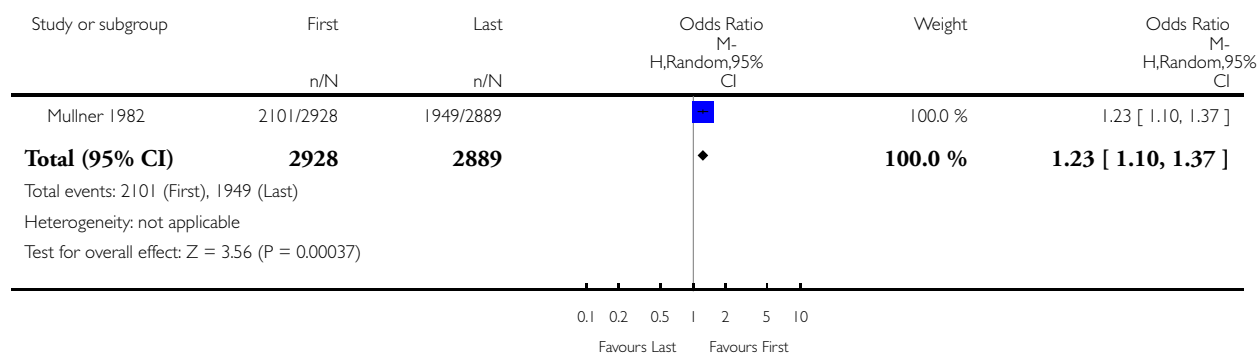


Analysis 70.2. Comparison 70 More relevant questions first vs. last, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 70 More relevant questions first vs. last

Outcome: 2 Final response

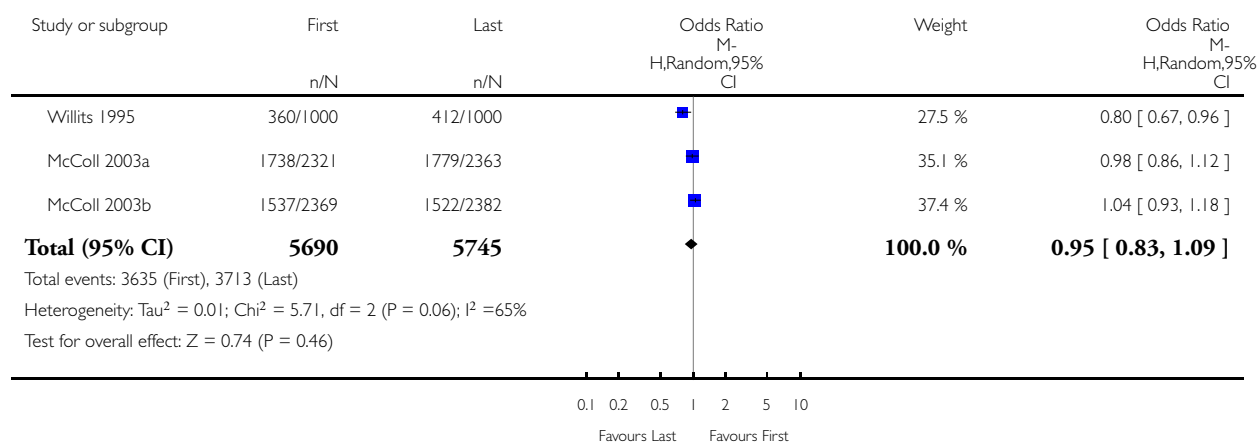


Analysis 71.2. Comparison 71 Most general question first vs. last, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 71 Most general question first vs. last

Outcome: 2 Final response

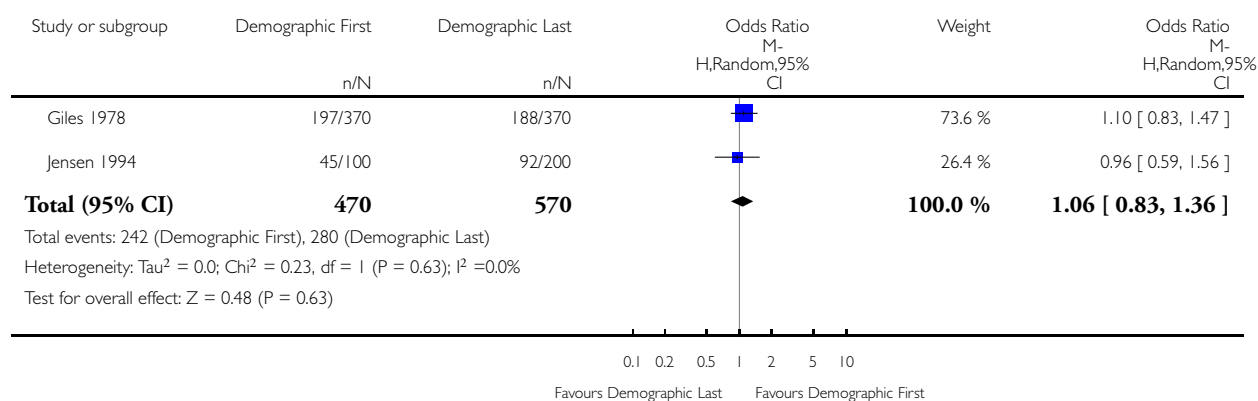


Analysis 72.1. Comparison 72 Demographic items first vs. last, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 72 Demographic items first vs. last

Outcome: 1 First response

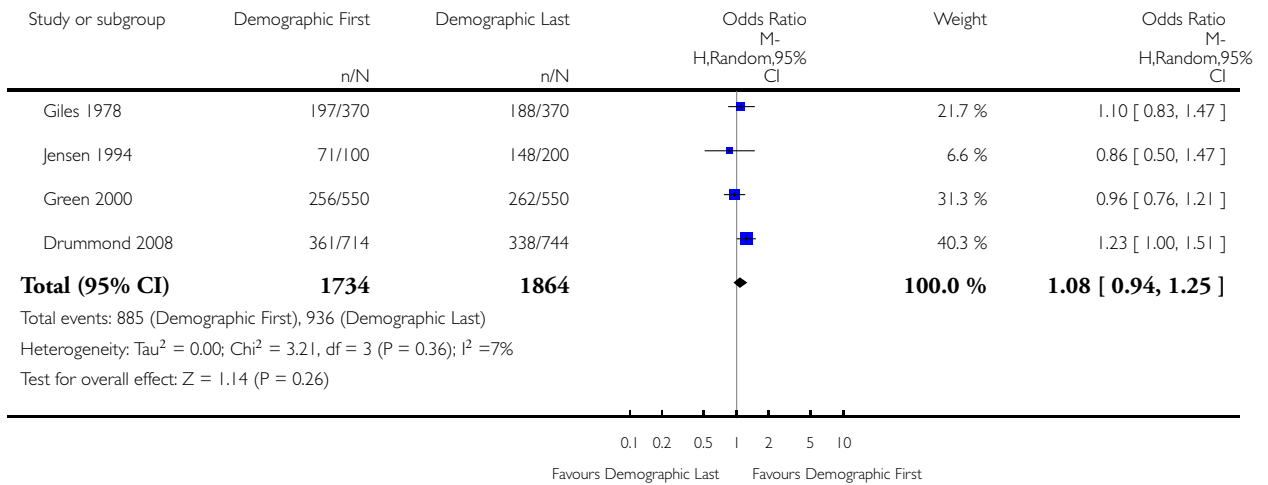


Analysis 72.2. Comparison 72 Demographic items first vs. last, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 72 Demographic items first vs. last

Outcome: 2 Final response

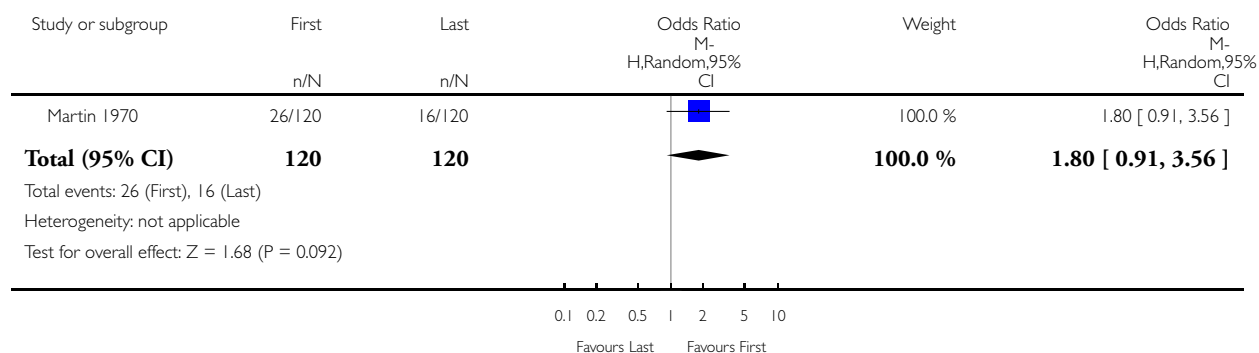


Analysis 73.1. Comparison 73 Easier questions first vs. last, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 73 Easier questions first vs. last

Outcome: 1 First response

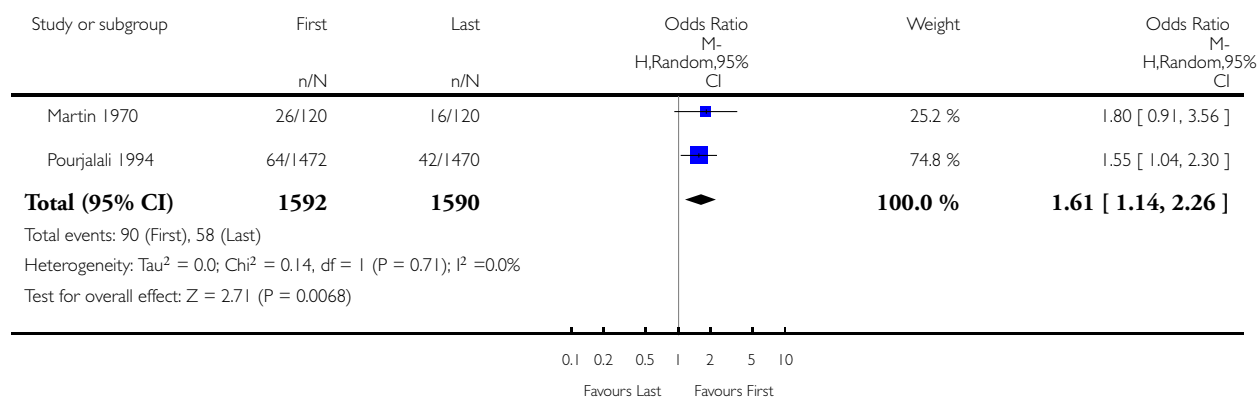


Analysis 73.2. Comparison 73 Easier questions first vs. last, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 73 Easier questions first vs. last

Outcome: 2 Final response

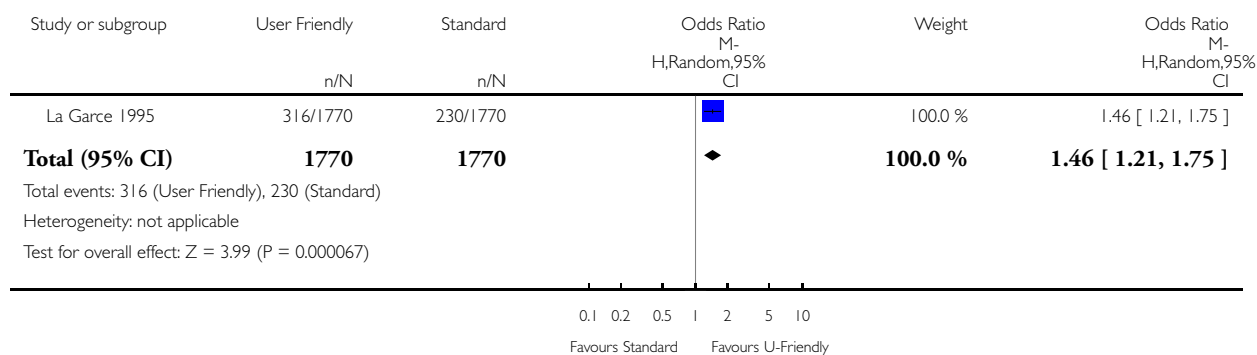


Analysis 74.1. Comparison 74 User friendly vs. standard questionnaire, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 74 User friendly vs. standard questionnaire

Outcome: 1 First response

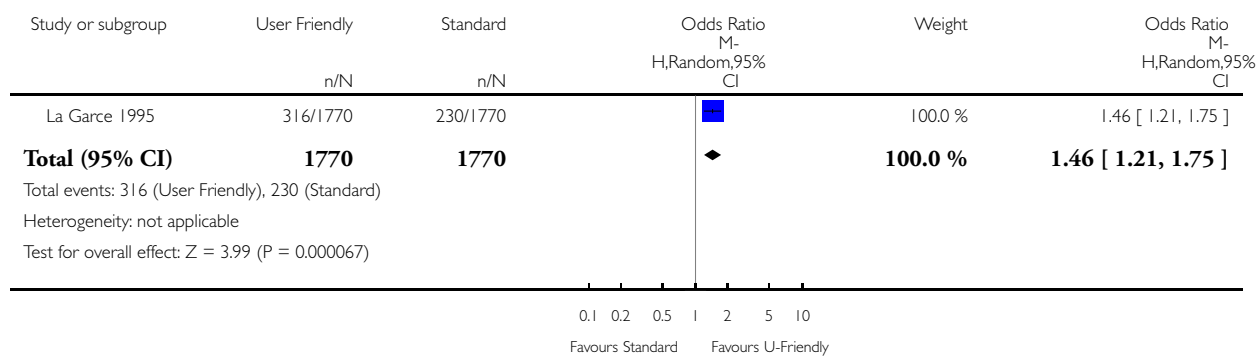


Analysis 74.2. Comparison 74 User friendly vs. standard questionnaire, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 74 User friendly vs. standard questionnaire

Outcome: 2 Final response

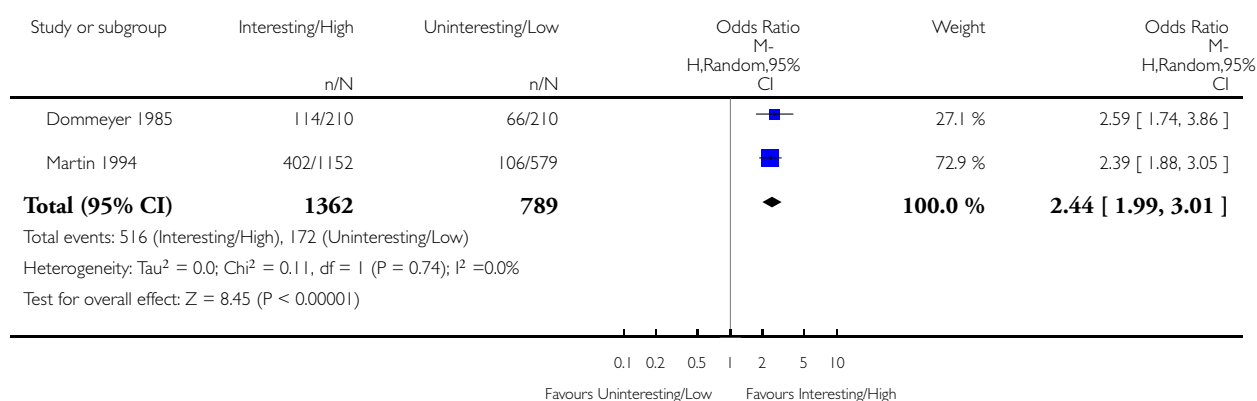


Analysis 75.1. Comparison 75 More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 75 More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low

Outcome: 1 First response

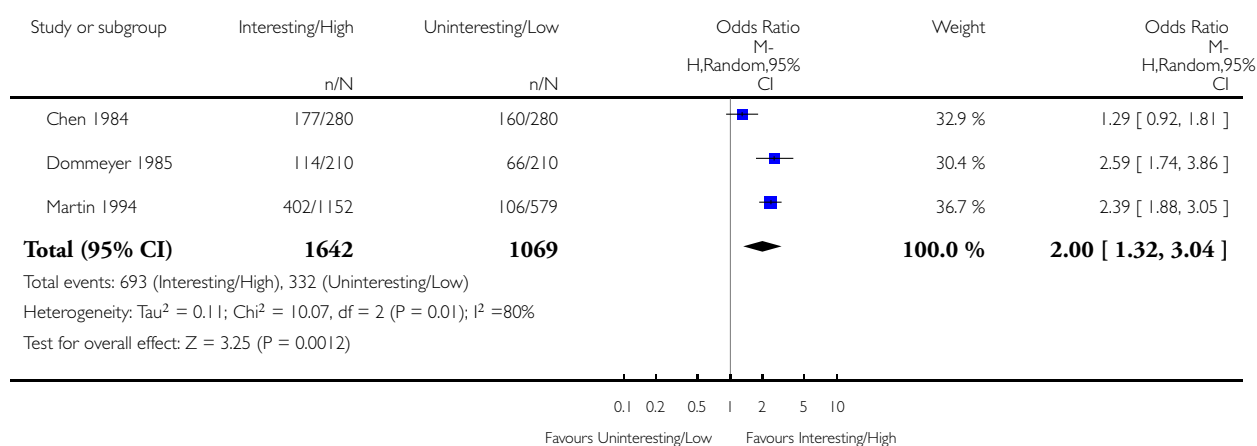


Analysis 75.2. Comparison 75 More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 75 More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low

Outcome: 2 Final response

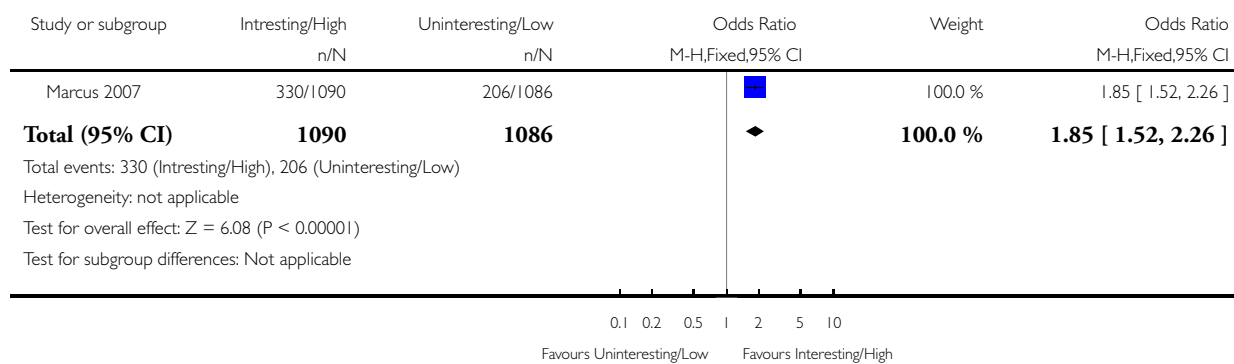


Analysis 75.4. Comparison 75 More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 75 More interesting vs. less or high salient topic vs. low

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

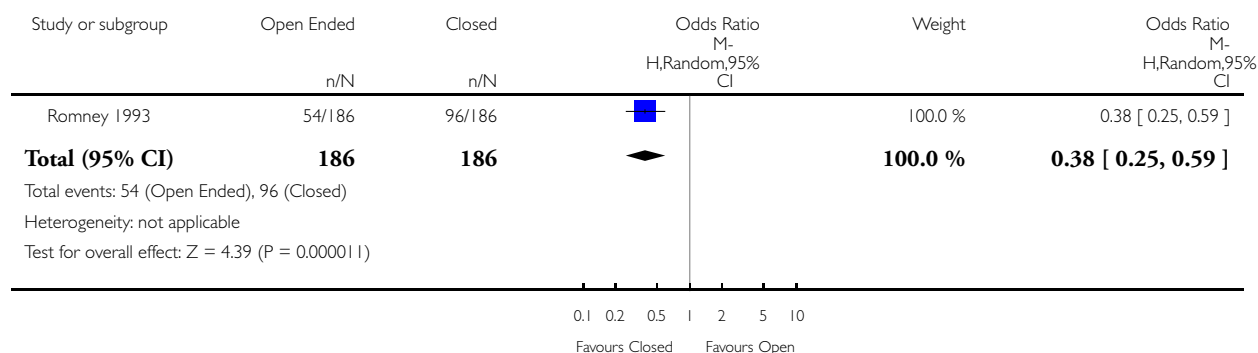


Analysis 76.1. Comparison 76 Open-ended vs. closed questions, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 76 Open-ended vs. closed questions

Outcome: 1 First response

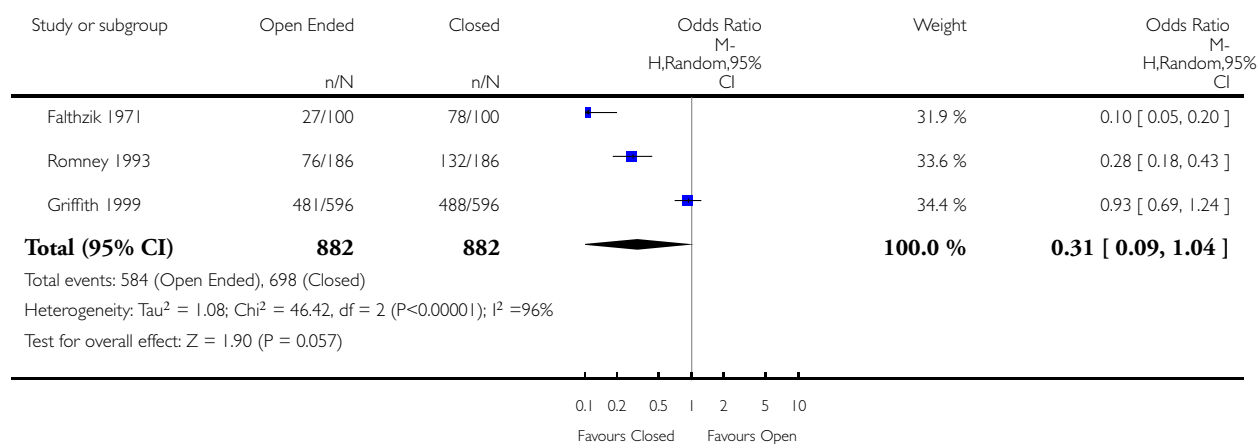


Analysis 76.2. Comparison 76 Open-ended vs. closed questions, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 76 Open-ended vs. closed questions

Outcome: 2 Final response

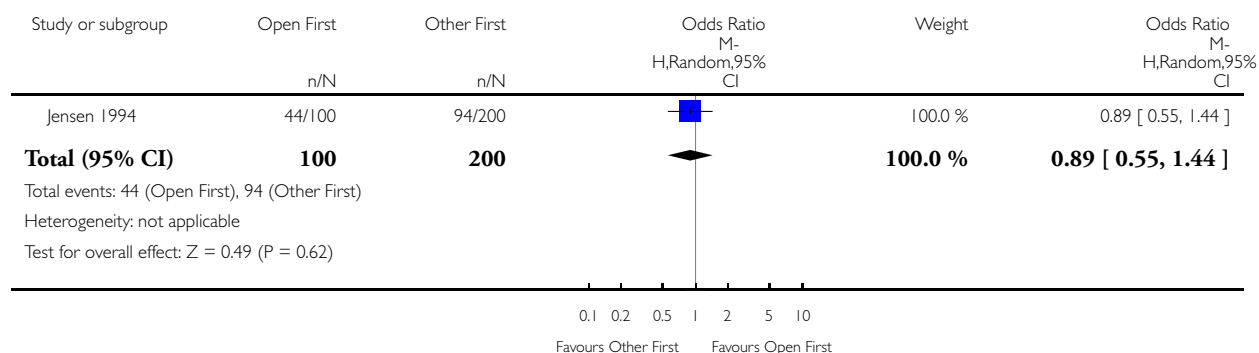


Analysis 77.1. Comparison 77 Open-ended items first vs. other items first, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 77 Open-ended items first vs. other items first

Outcome: 1 First response

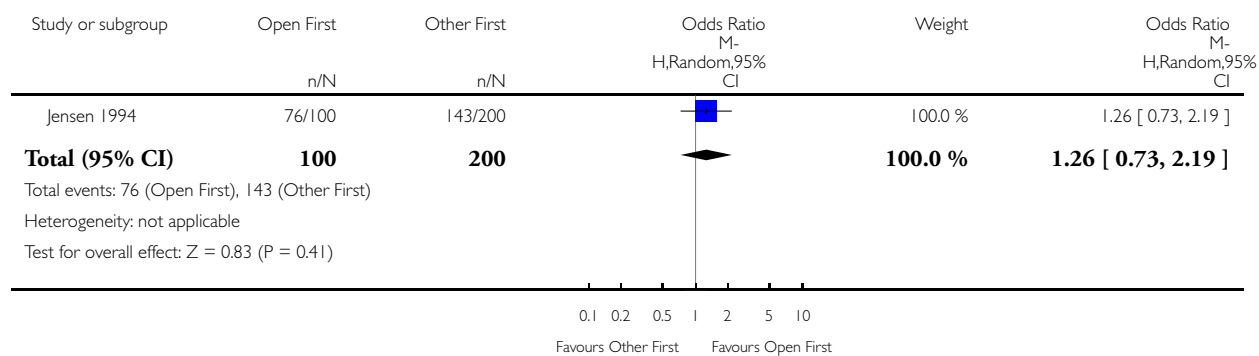


Analysis 77.2. Comparison 77 Open-ended items first vs. other items first, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 77 Open-ended items first vs. other items first

Outcome: 2 Final response

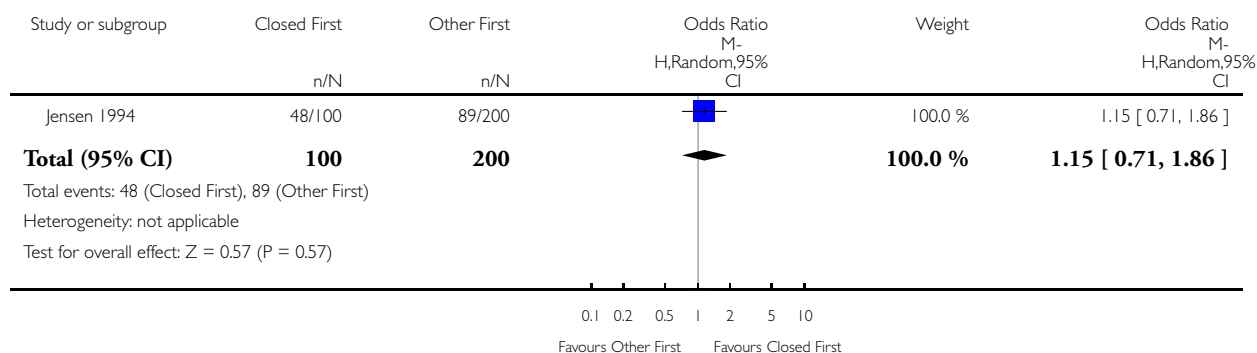


Analysis 78.1. Comparison 78 Closed-ended items first vs. other items first, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 78 Closed-ended items first vs. other items first

Outcome: 1 First response

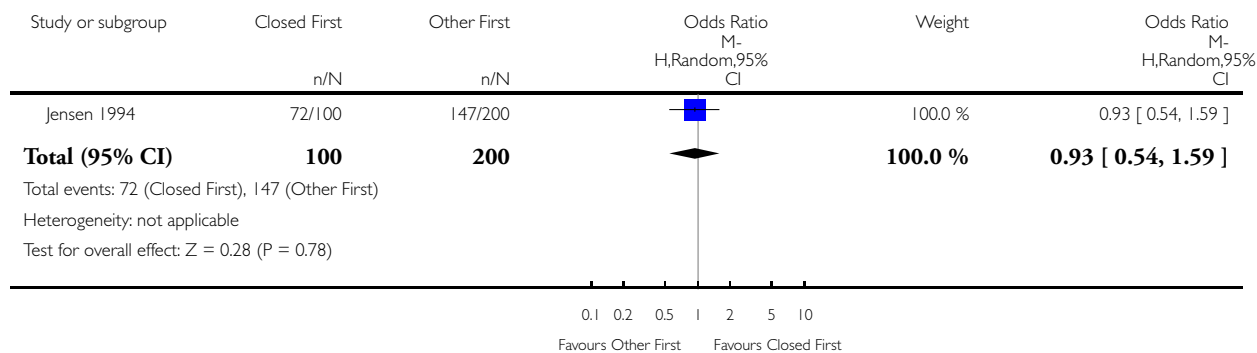


Analysis 78.2. Comparison 78 Closed-ended items first vs. other items first, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 78 Closed-ended items first vs. other items first

Outcome: 2 Final response

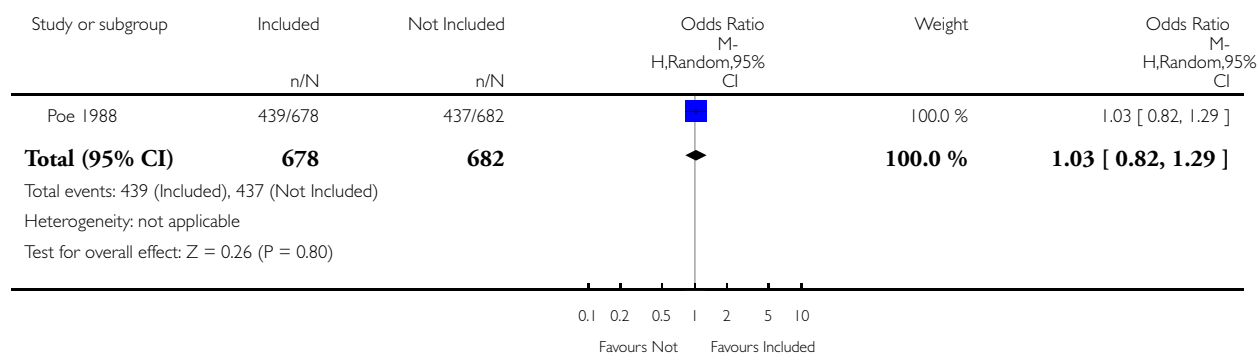


Analysis 79.2. Comparison 79 'Don't know' boxes included vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 79 'Don't know' boxes included vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

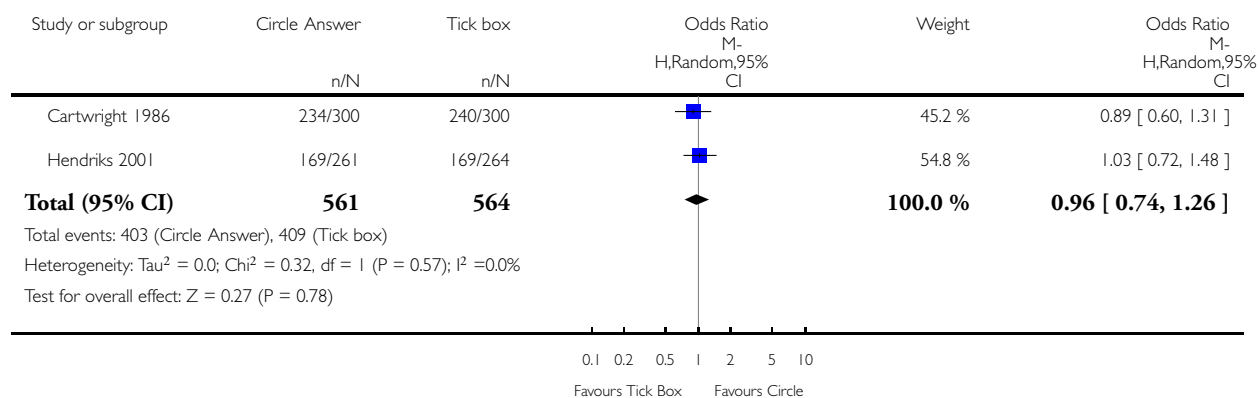


Analysis 80.2. Comparison 80 Circle answer vs. tick box format, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 80 Circle answer vs. tick box format

Outcome: 2 Final response

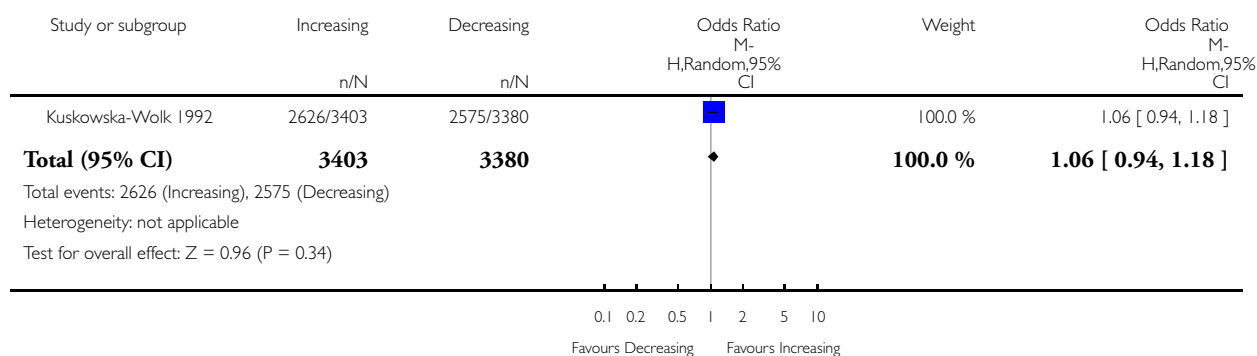


Analysis 81.2. Comparison 81 Response options listed in increasing vs. decreasing order, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 81 Response options listed in increasing vs. decreasing order

Outcome: 2 Final response

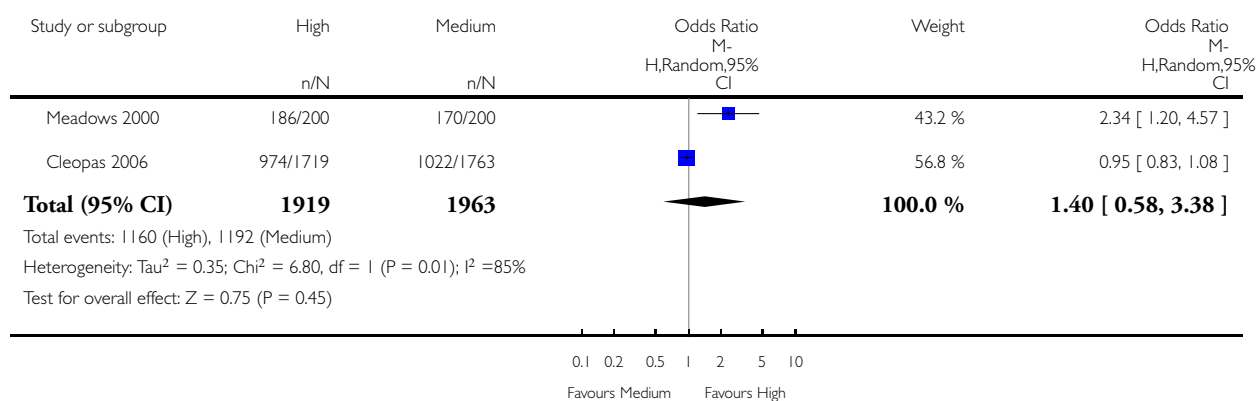


Analysis 82.2. Comparison 82 High vs. medium frequency response alternatives, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 82 High vs. medium frequency response alternatives

Outcome: 2 Final response

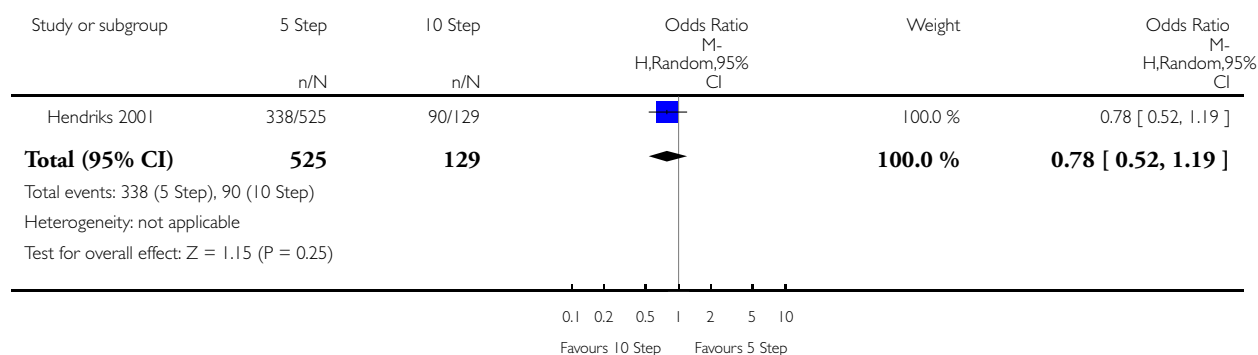


Analysis 83.2. Comparison 83 5-step vs. 10-step response scale, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 83 5-step vs. 10-step response scale

Outcome: 2 Final response

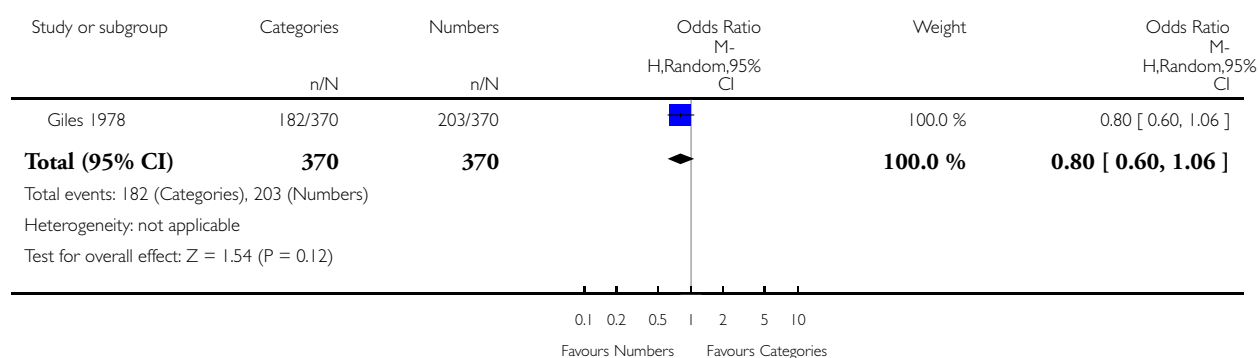


Analysis 84.1. Comparison 84 Check categories or specify numbers vs. check categories only, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 84 Check categories or specify numbers vs. check categories only

Outcome: 1 First response

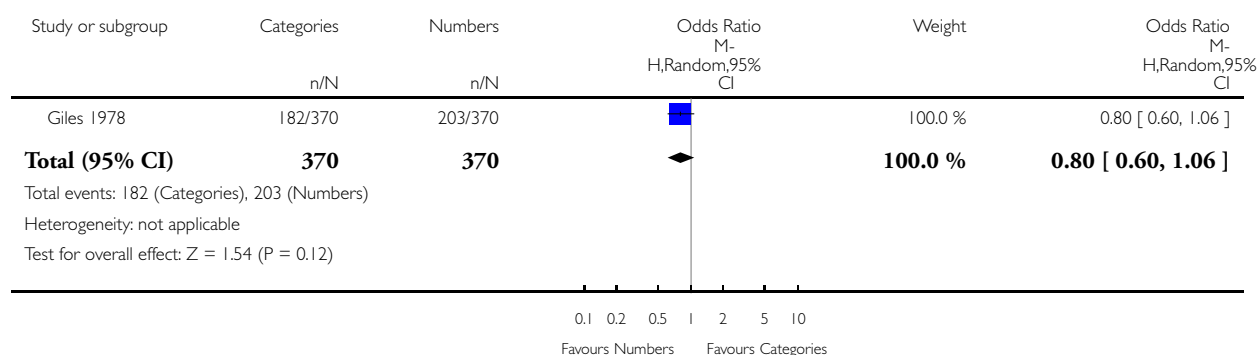


Analysis 84.2. Comparison 84 Check categories or specify numbers vs. check categories only, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 84 Check categories or specify numbers vs. check categories only

Outcome: 2 Final response

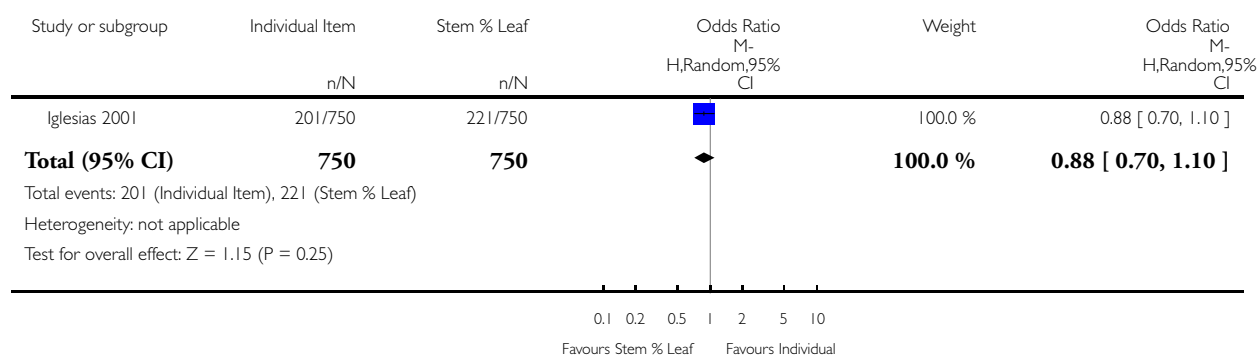


Analysis 85.2. Comparison 85 Individual item vs. stem & leaf format, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 85 Individual item vs. stem % leaf format

Outcome: 2 Final response

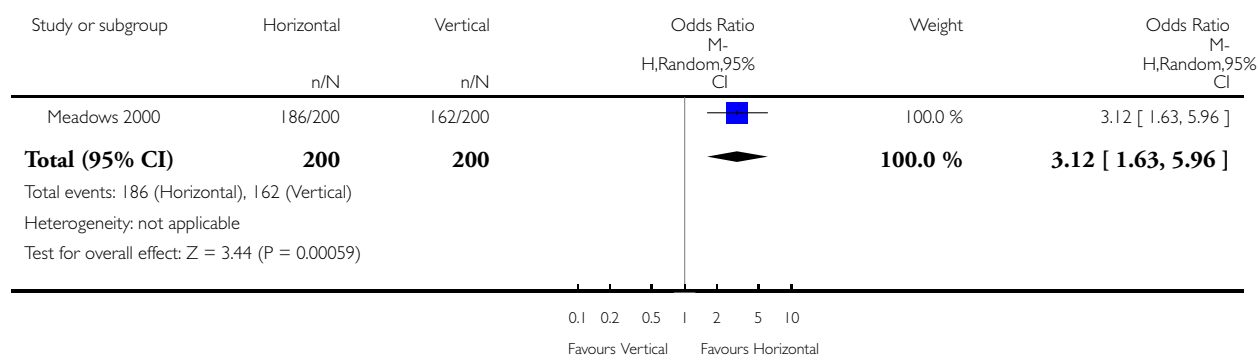


Analysis 86.2. Comparison 86 Horizontal vs. vertical orientation of response options, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 86 Horizontal vs. vertical orientation of response options

Outcome: 2 Final response

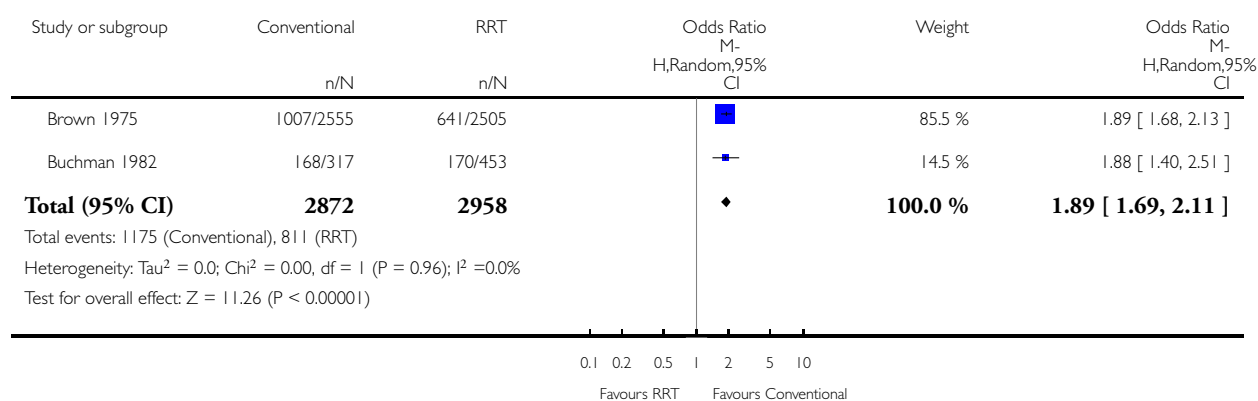


Analysis 87.1. Comparison 87 Conventional vs. randomised response technique, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 87 Conventional vs. randomised response technique

Outcome: 1 First response

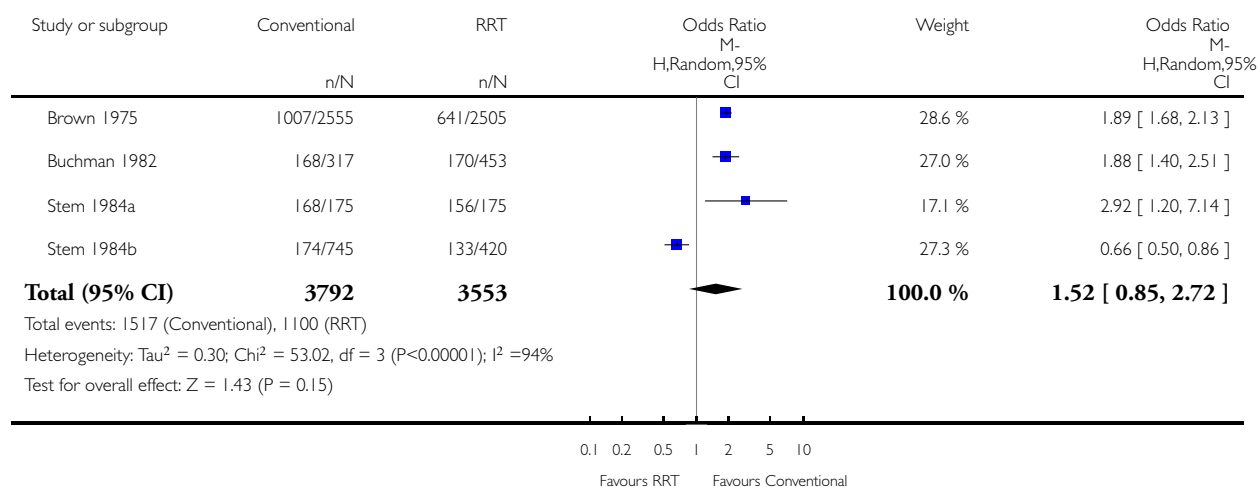


Analysis 87.2. Comparison 87 Conventional vs. randomised response technique, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 87 Conventional vs. randomised response technique

Outcome: 2 Final response

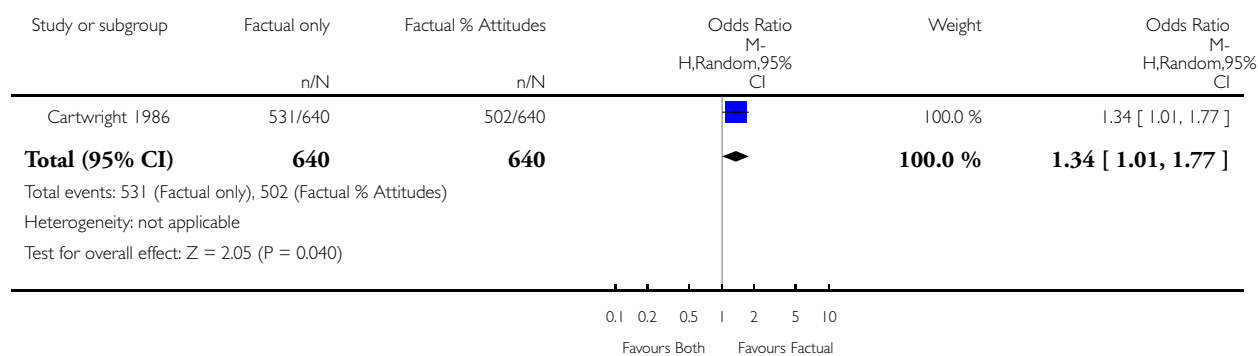


Analysis 88.2. Comparison 88 Factual questions only vs. factual and attitudinal questions, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 88 Factual questions only vs. factual and attitudinal questions

Outcome: 2 Final response

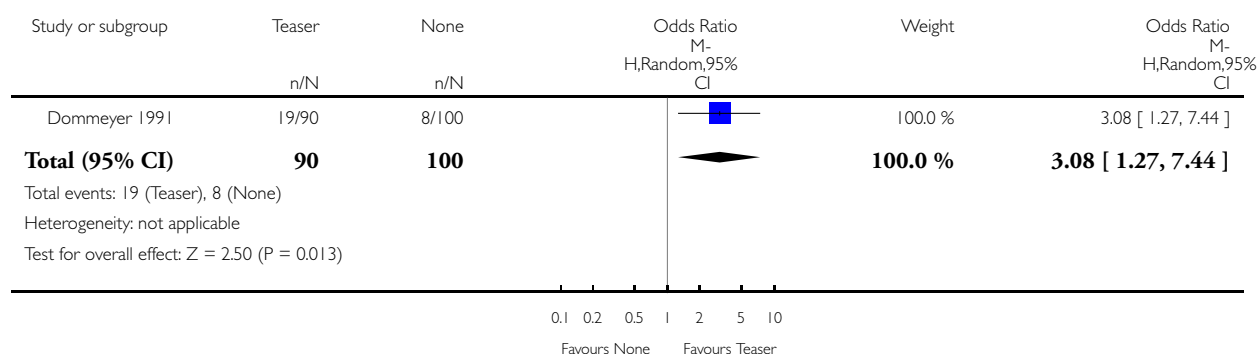


Analysis 89.1. Comparison 89 Teaser on envelope vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 89 Teaser on envelope vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

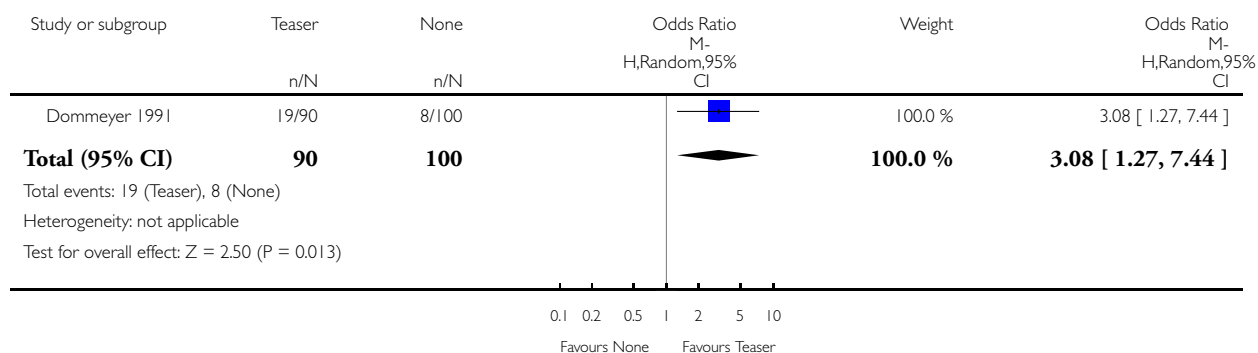


Analysis 89.2. Comparison 89 Teaser on envelope vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 89 Teaser on envelope vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

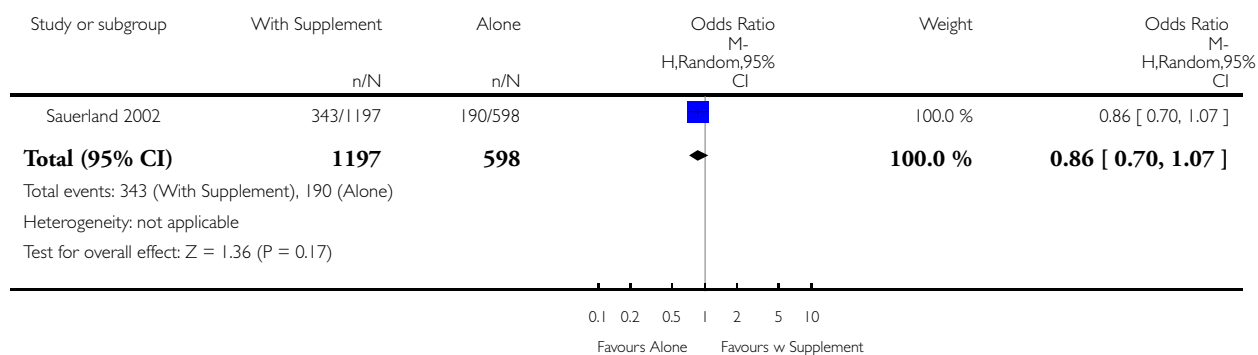


Analysis 90.2. Comparison 90 Questionnaire sent with supplement vs. alone, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 90 Questionnaire sent with supplement vs. alone

Outcome: 2 Final response

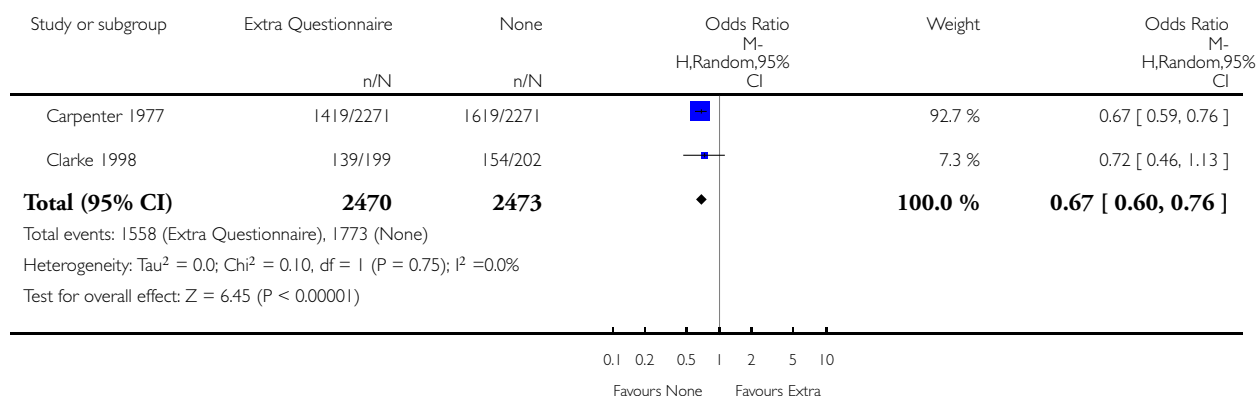


Analysis 91.2. Comparison 91 Extra questionnaire for relatives included vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 91 Extra questionnaire for relatives included vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

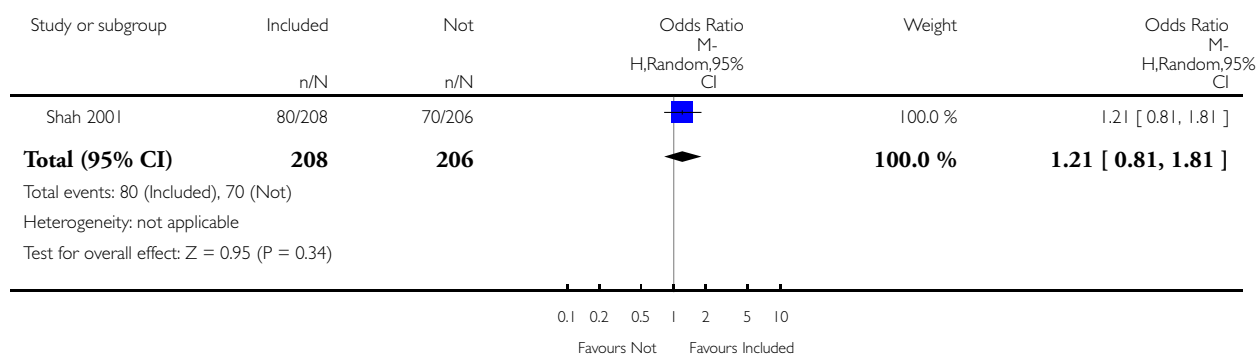


Analysis 92.1. Comparison 92 Consent form included vs. not, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 92 Consent form included vs. not

Outcome: 1 First response

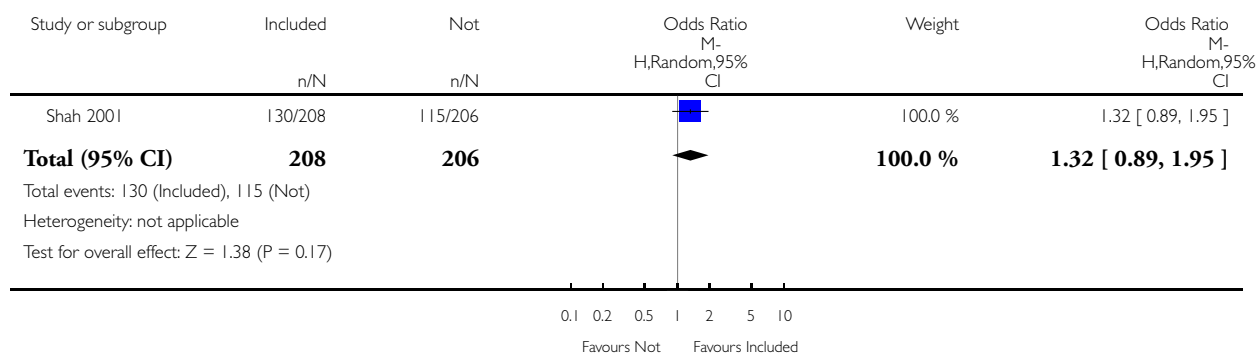


Analysis 92.2. Comparison 92 Consent form included vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 92 Consent form included vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

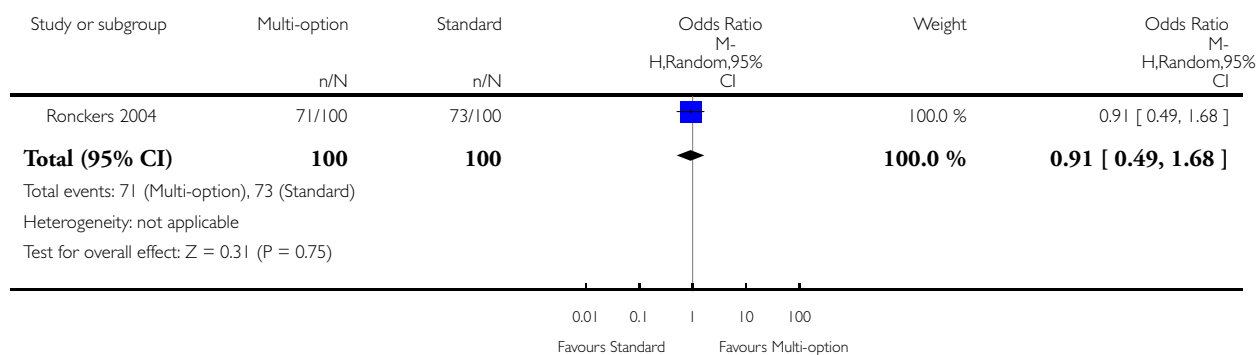


Analysis 93.2. Comparison 93 Multi-option vs. standard consent form, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 93 Multi-option vs. standard consent form

Outcome: 2 Final response

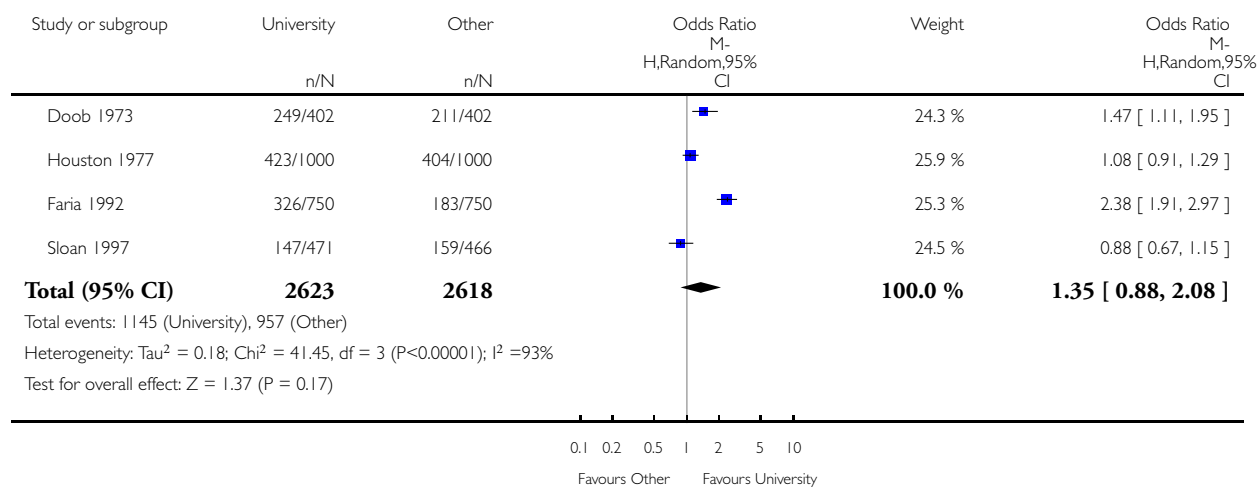


Analysis 94.1. Comparison 94 University sponsor/source vs. other, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 94 University sponsor/source vs. other

Outcome: 1 First response

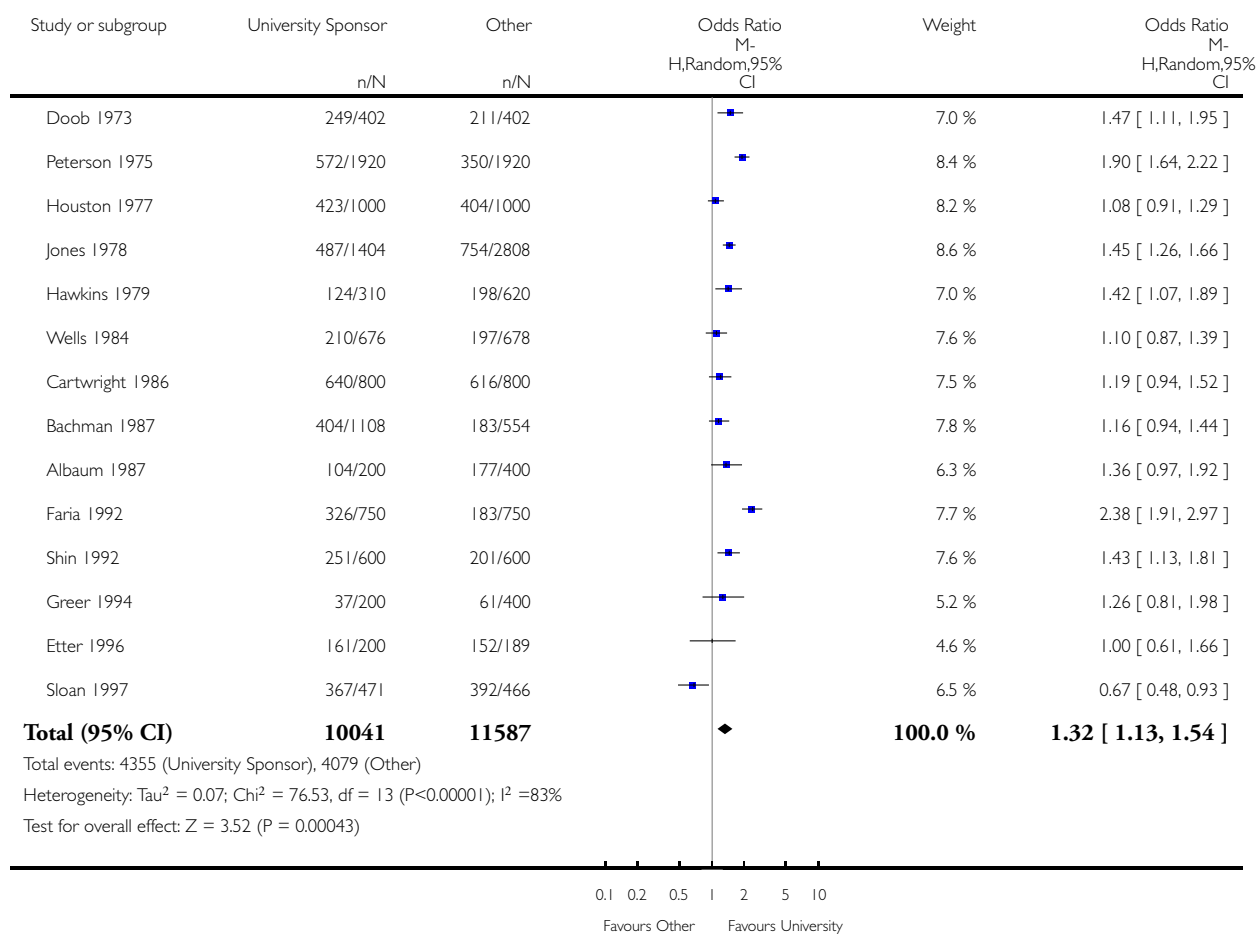


Analysis 94.2. Comparison 94 University sponsor/source vs. other, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 94 University sponsor/source vs. other

Outcome: 2 Final response

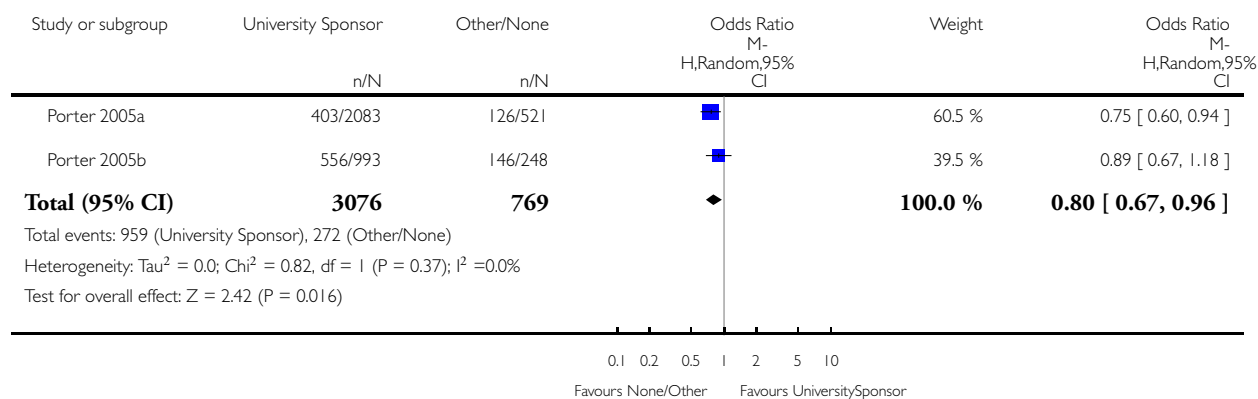


Analysis 94.3. Comparison 94 University sponsor/source vs. other, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 94 University sponsor/source vs. other

Outcome: 3 e - Login

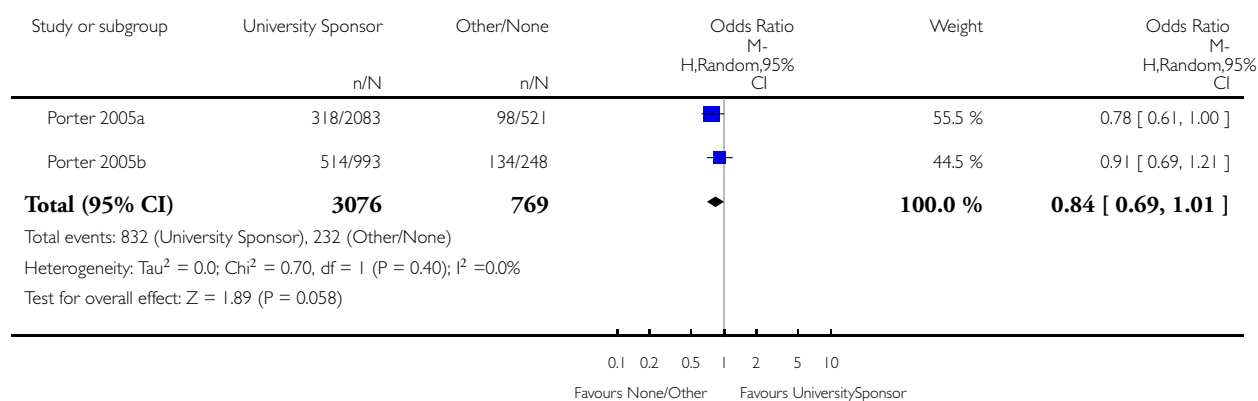


Analysis 94.4. Comparison 94 University sponsor/source vs. other, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 94 University sponsor/source vs. other

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

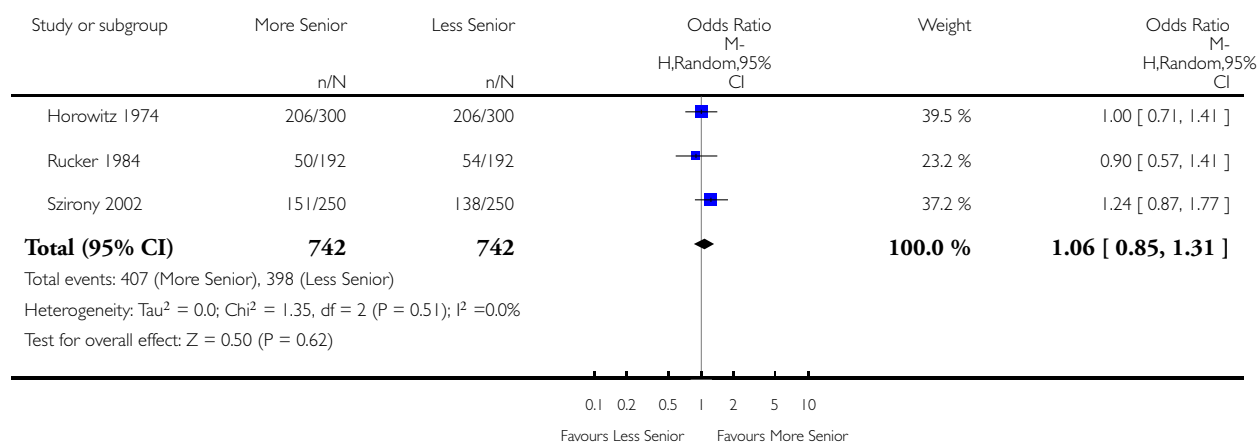


Analysis 95.1. Comparison 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person

Outcome: 1 First response

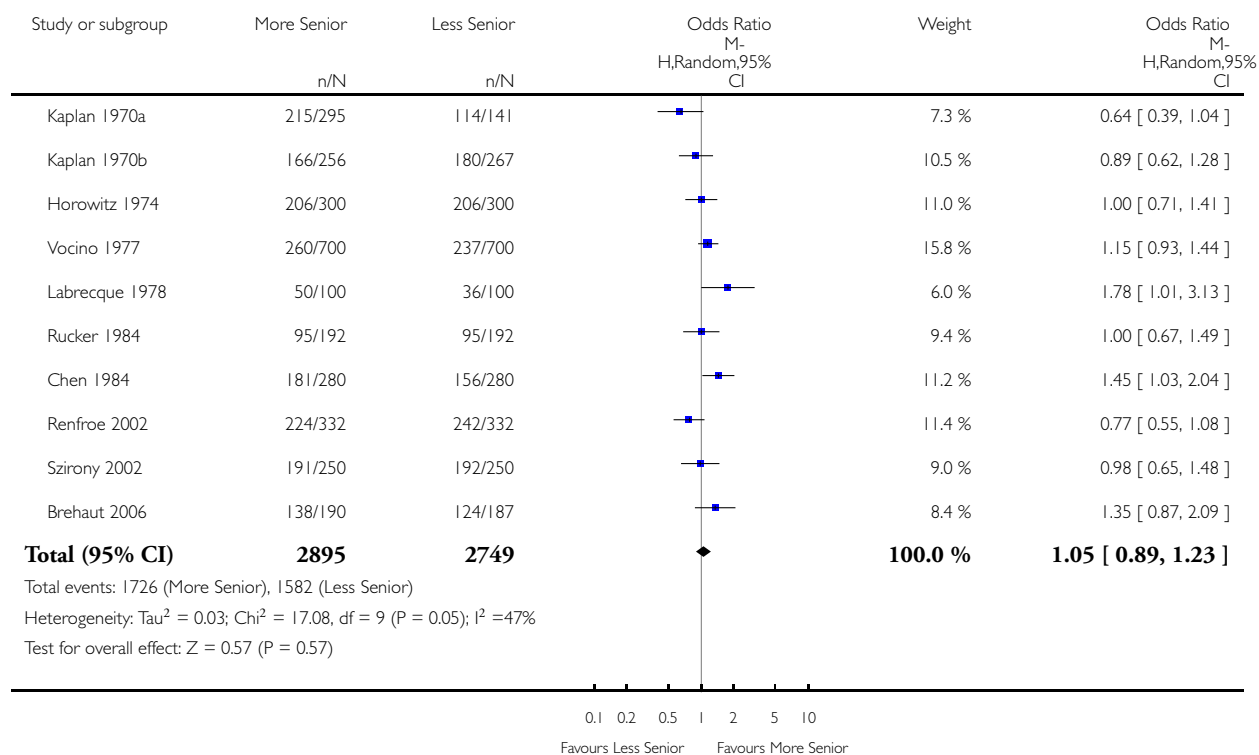


Analysis 95.2. Comparison 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person

Outcome: 2 Final response

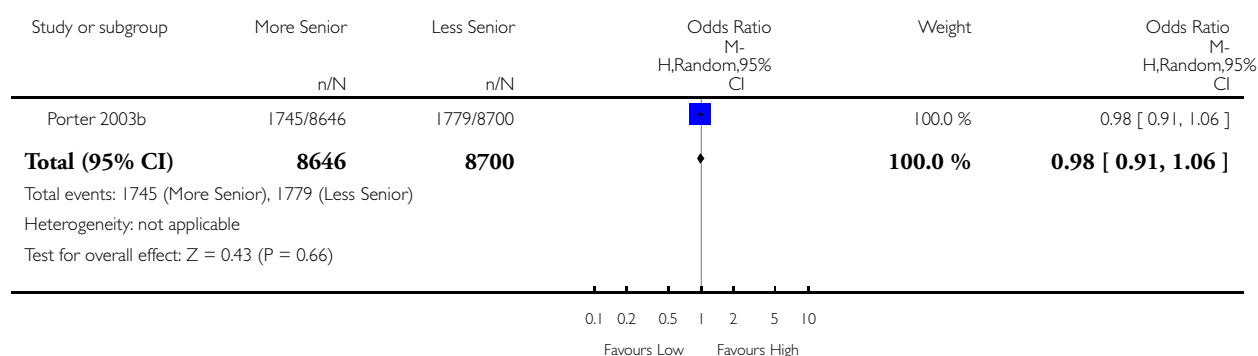


Analysis 95.3. Comparison 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person

Outcome: 3 e - Login

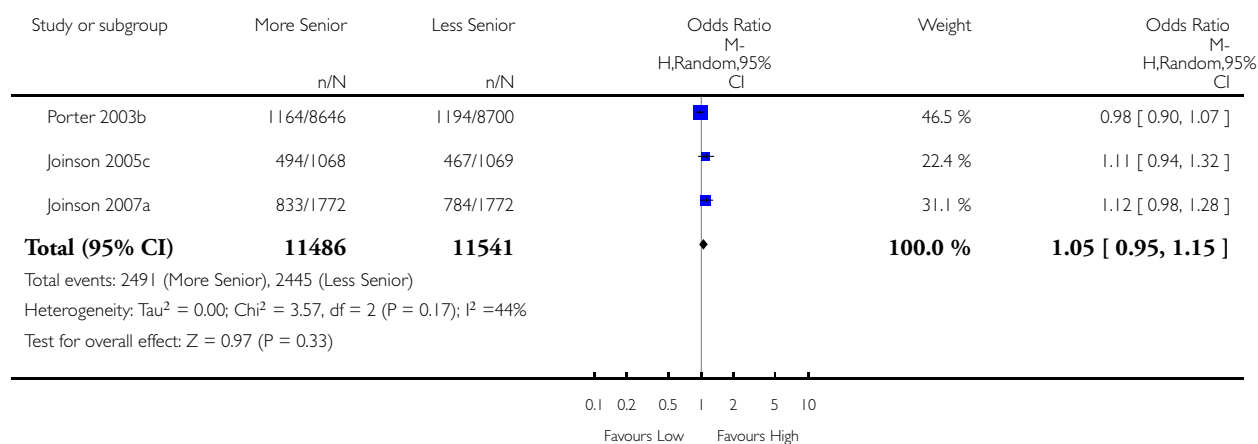


Analysis 95.4. Comparison 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 95 Sent or signed by more vs. less senior/well-known person

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

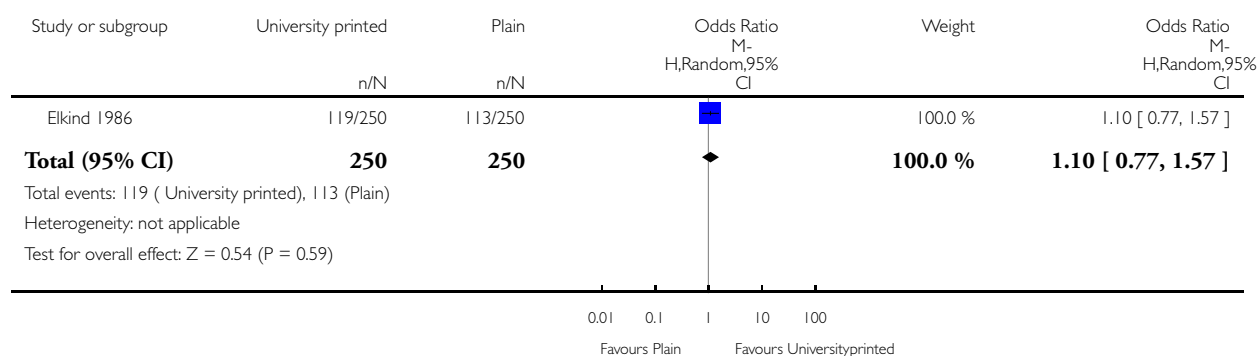


Analysis 96.1. Comparison 96 University printed envelope vs. plain, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 96 University printed envelope vs. plain

Outcome: 1 First response

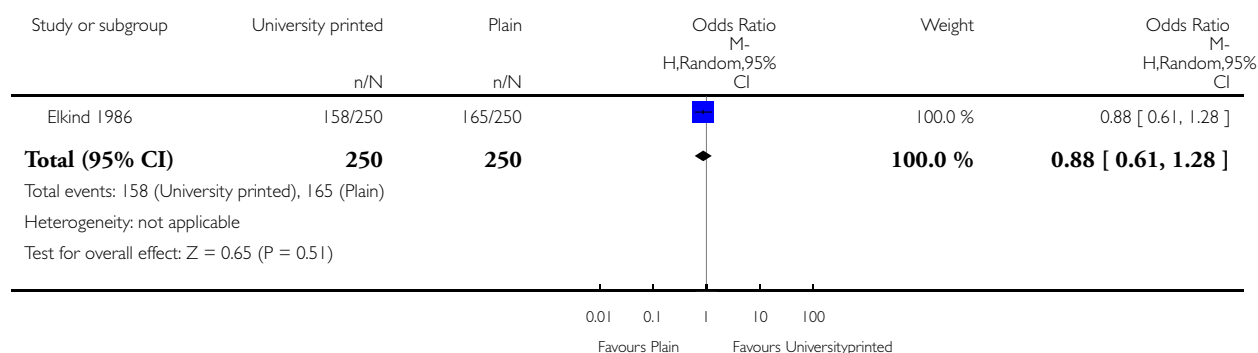


Analysis 96.2. Comparison 96 University printed envelope vs. plain, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 96 University printed envelope vs. plain

Outcome: 2 Final response

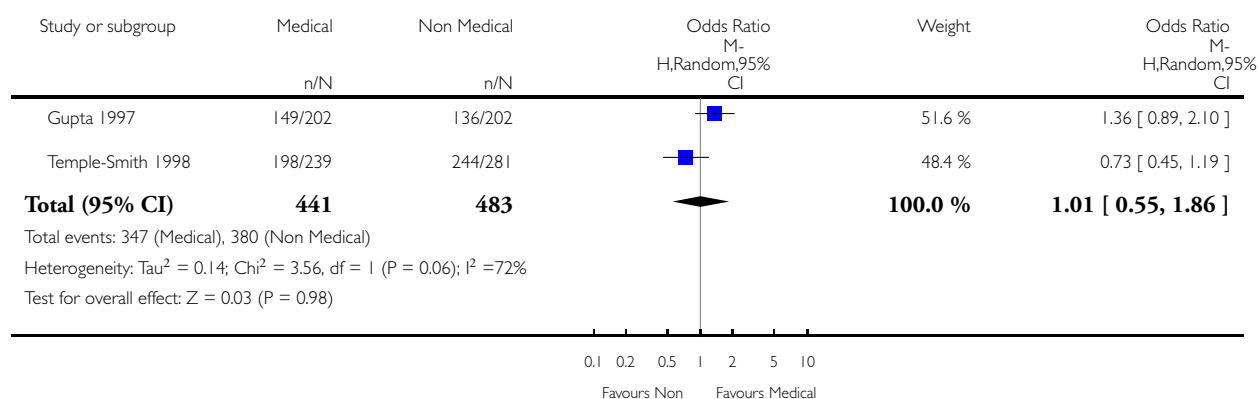


Analysis 97.2. Comparison 97 Pre-contact by medical researcher vs. non medical researcher, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 97 Pre-contact by medical researcher vs. non medical researcher

Outcome: 2 Final response

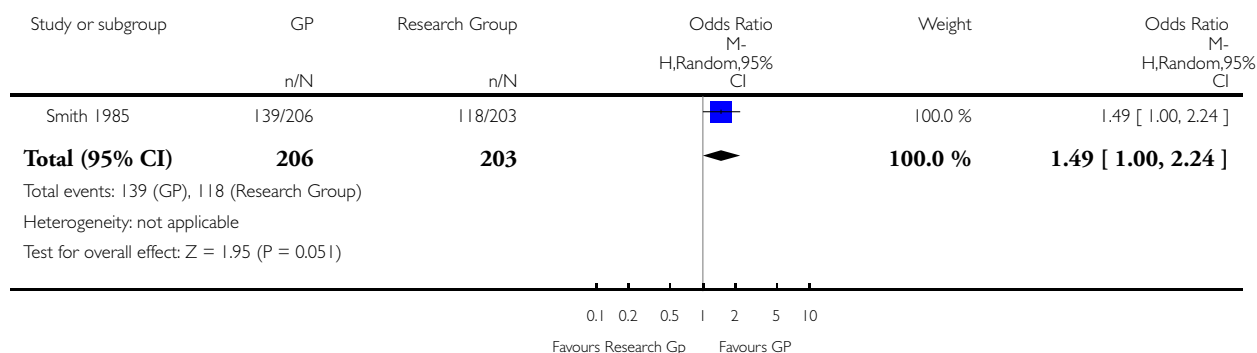


Analysis 98.1. Comparison 98 Q'aire sent by GP vs. by research group, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 98 Q'aire sent by GP vs. by research group

Outcome: 1 First response

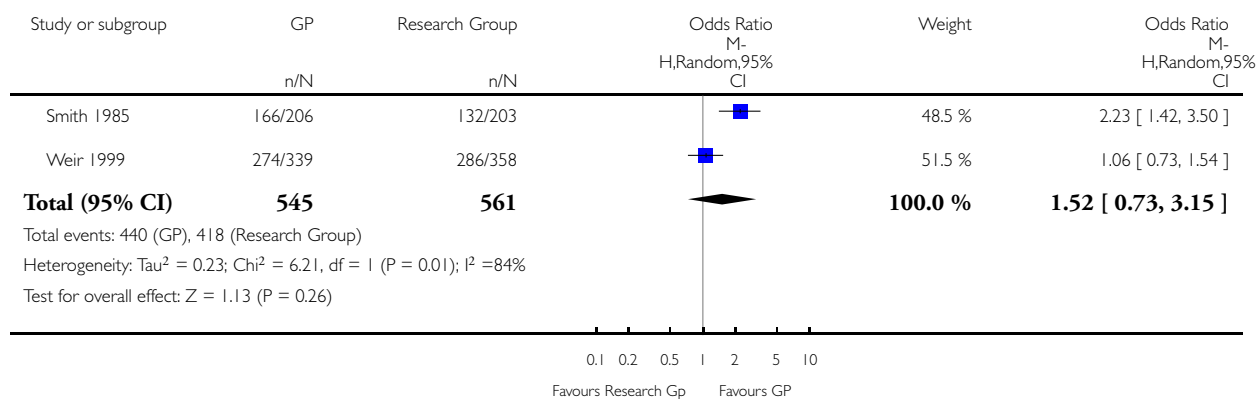


Analysis 98.2. Comparison 98 Q'aire sent by GP vs. by research group, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 98 Q'aire sent by GP vs. by research group

Outcome: 2 Final response

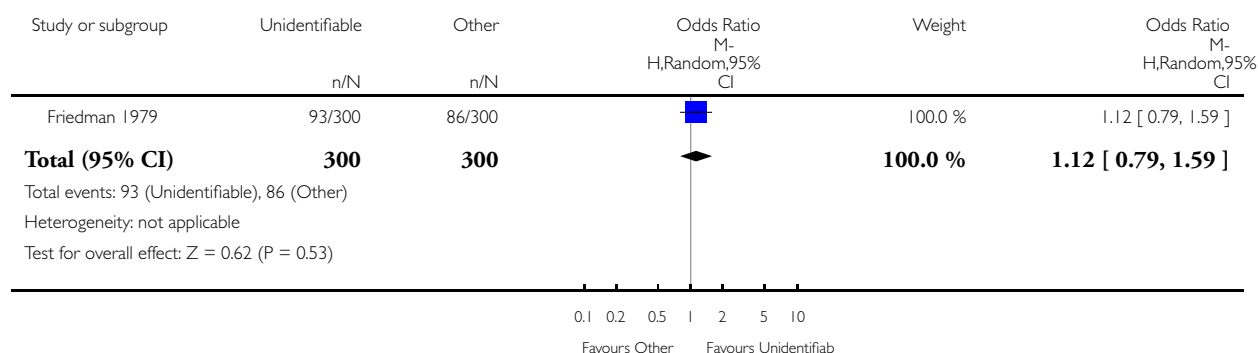


Analysis 99.1. Comparison 99 Ethnically unidentifiable/white vs. other name, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 99 Ethnically unidentifiable/white vs. other name

Outcome: 1 First response

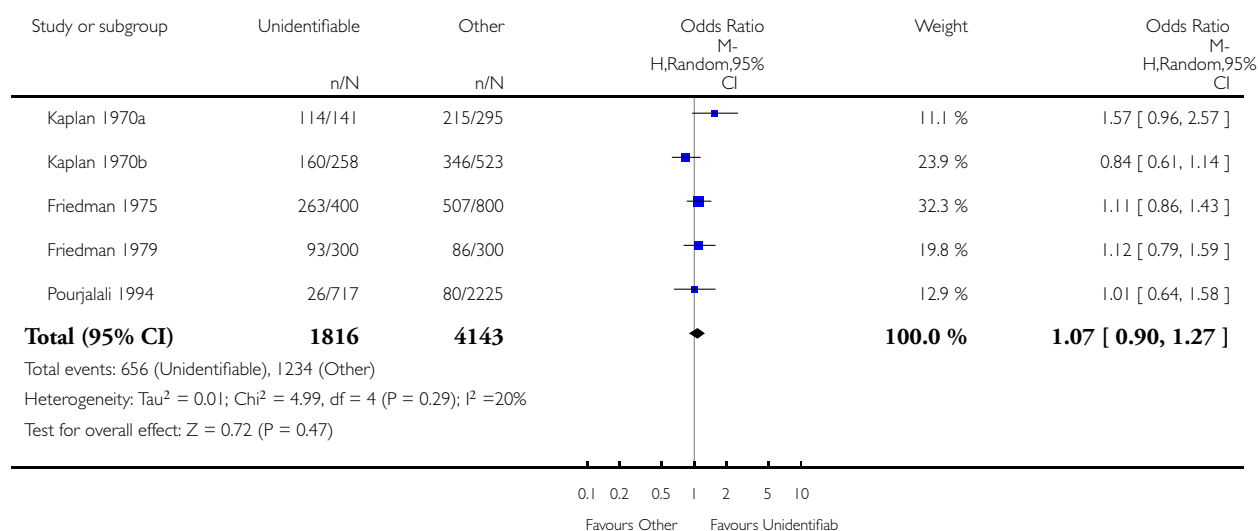


Analysis 99.2. Comparison 99 Ethnically unidentifiable/white vs. other name, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 99 Ethnically unidentifiable/white vs. other name

Outcome: 2 Final response

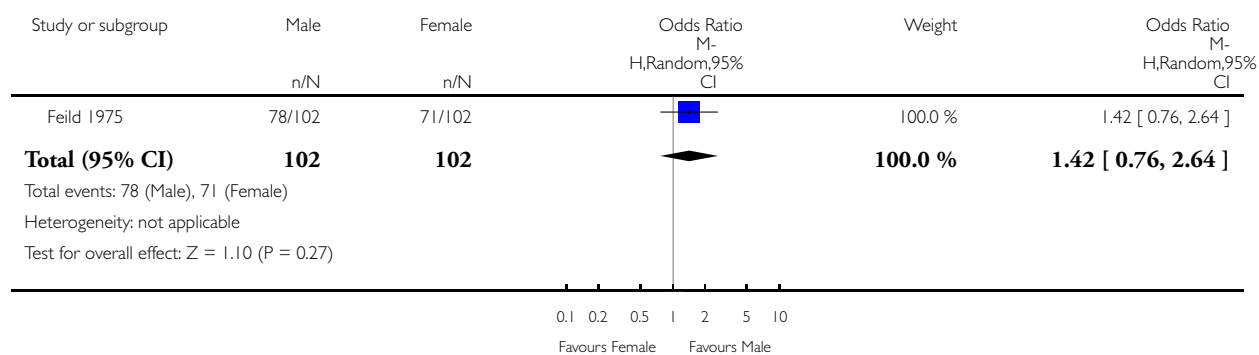


Analysis 100.1. Comparison 100 Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 100 Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature

Outcome: 1 First response

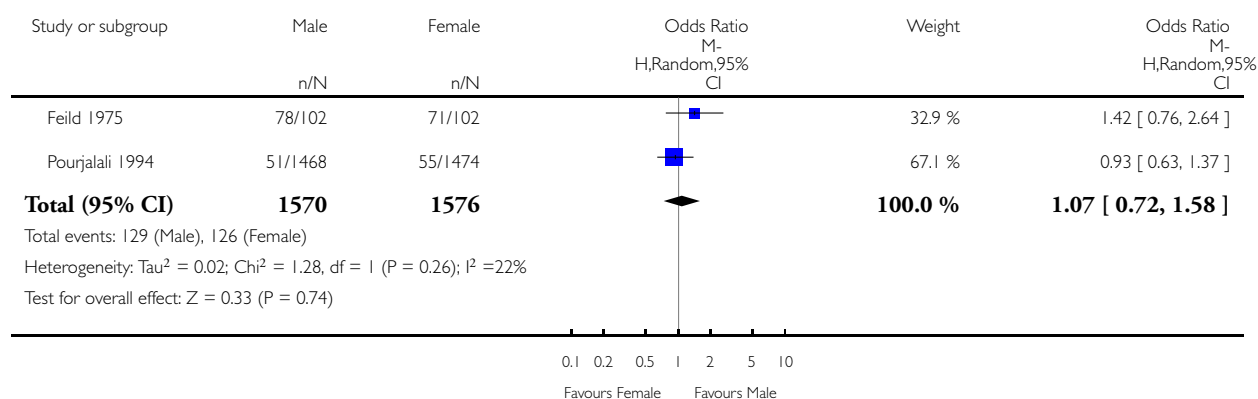


Analysis 100.2. Comparison 100 Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 100 Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature

Outcome: 2 Final response

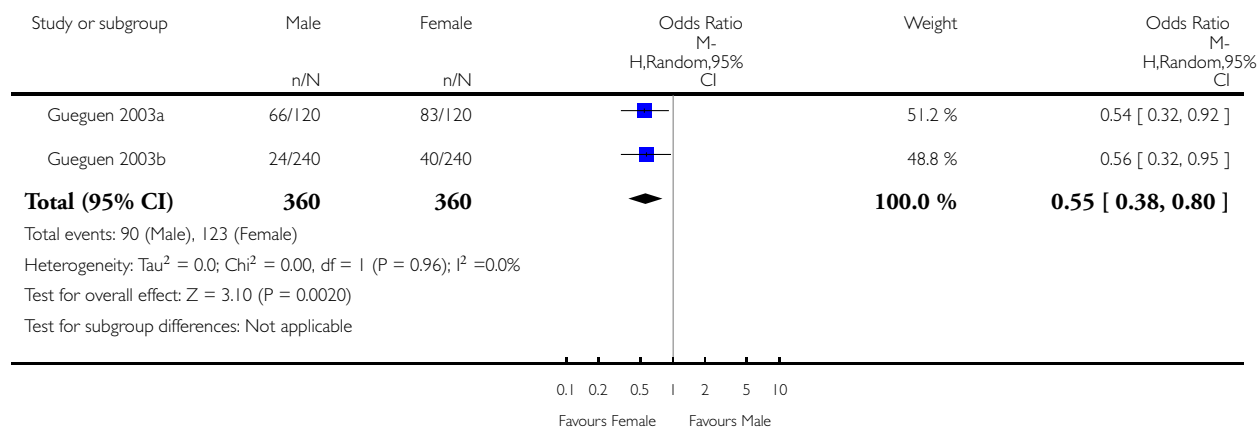


Analysis 100.4. Comparison 100 Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 100 Male vs. female investigator or male vs. female signature

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

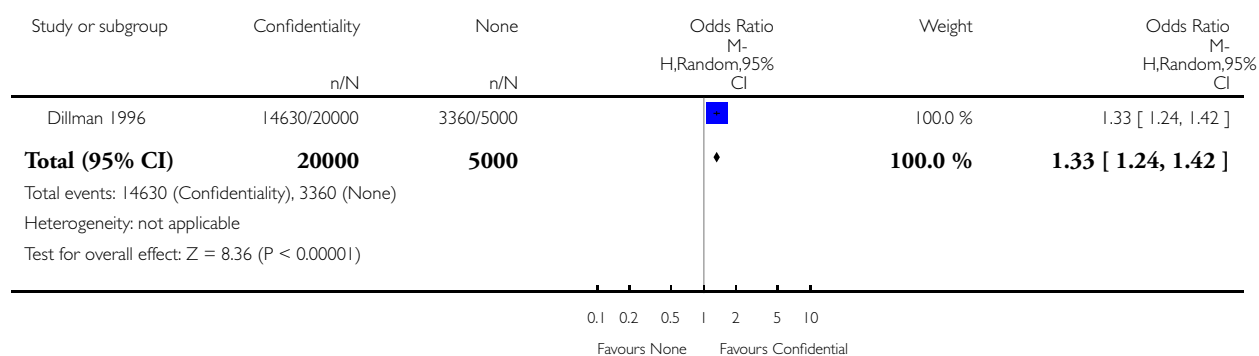


Analysis 101.2. Comparison 101 Assurance of confidentiality vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 101 Assurance of confidentiality vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

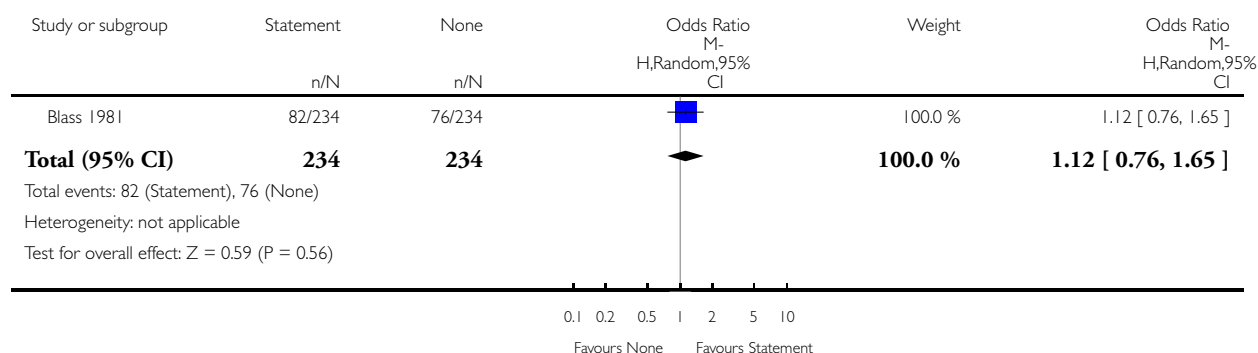


Analysis 102.1. Comparison 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement

Outcome: 1 First response

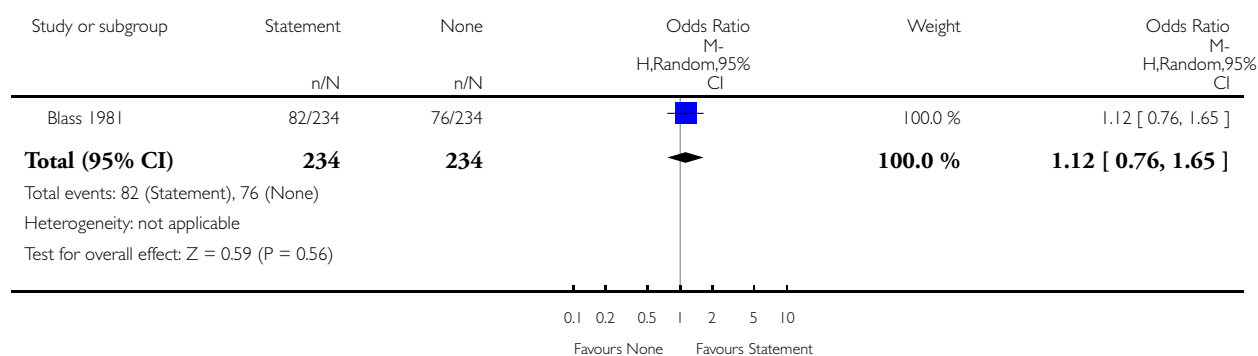


Analysis 102.2. Comparison 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement

Outcome: 2 Final response

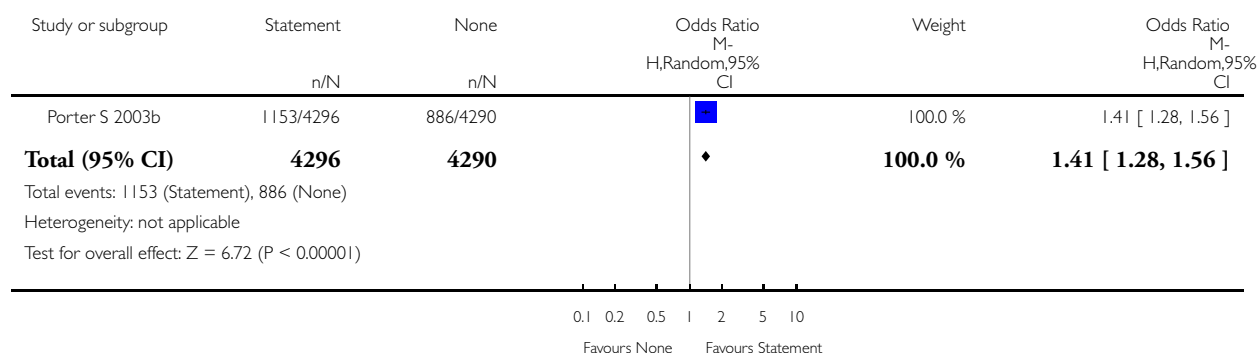


Analysis 102.3. Comparison 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement

Outcome: 3 e - Login

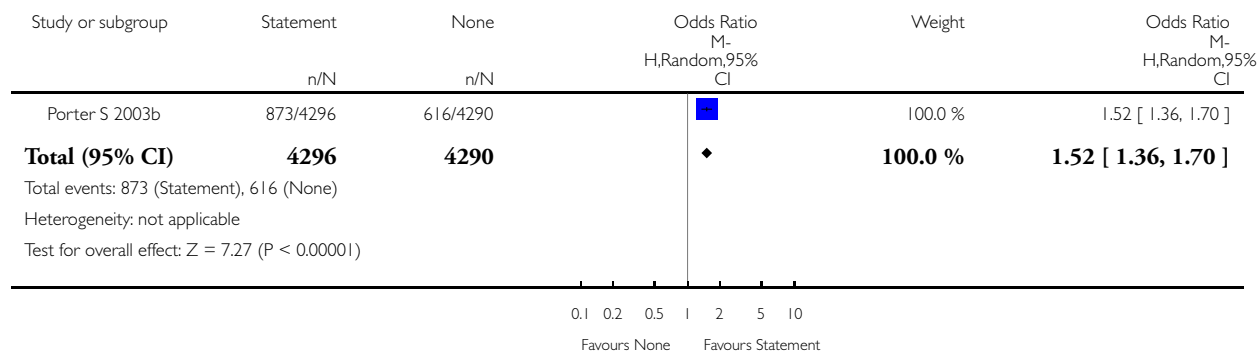


Analysis 102.4. Comparison 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 102 Included statement that others had responded vs. no statement

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

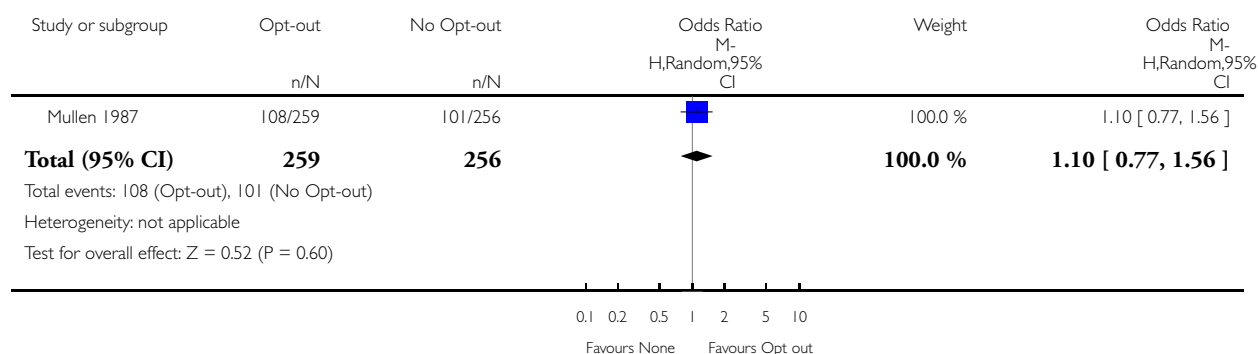


Analysis 103.1. Comparison 103 Choice to opt-out from study vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 103 Choice to opt-out from study vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

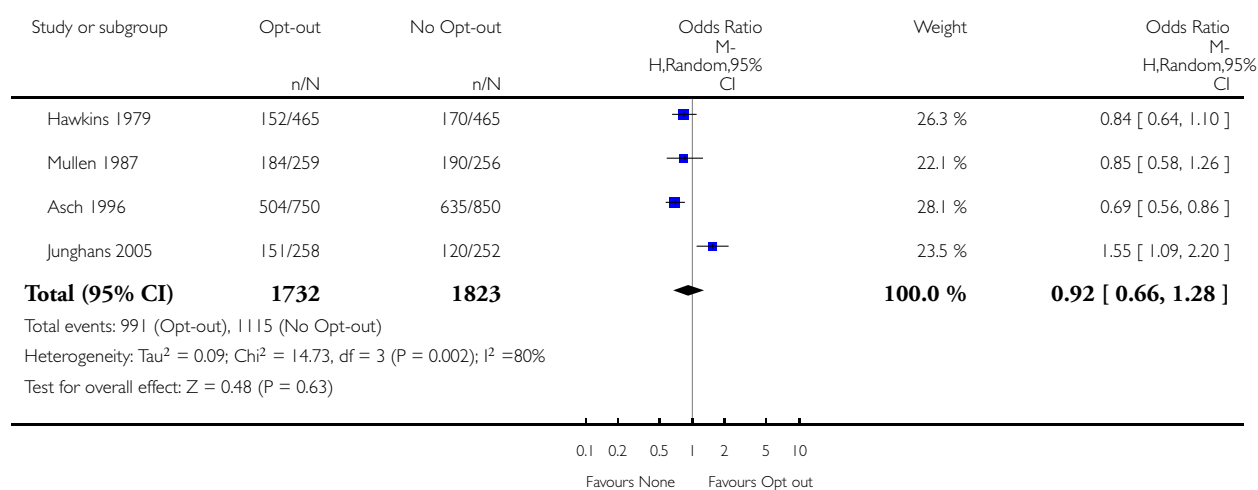


Analysis 103.2. Comparison 103 Choice to opt-out from study vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 103 Choice to opt-out from study vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

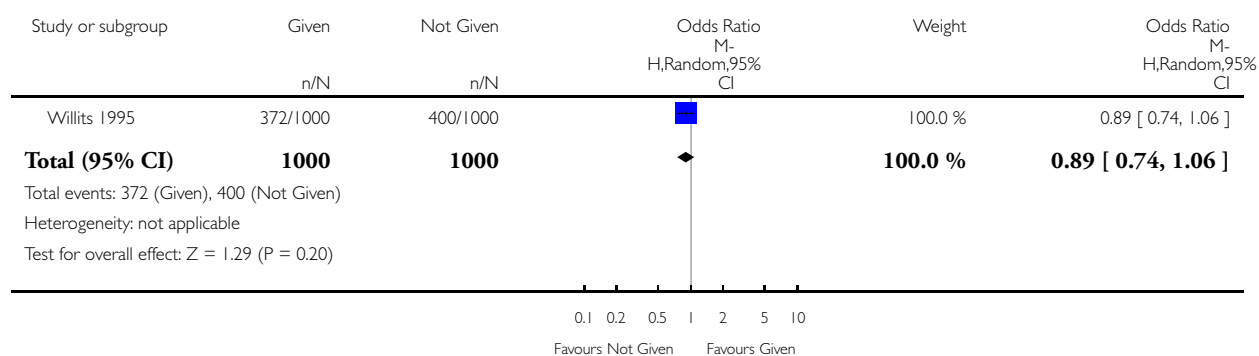


Analysis 104.2. Comparison 104 Instructions given vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 104 Instructions given vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

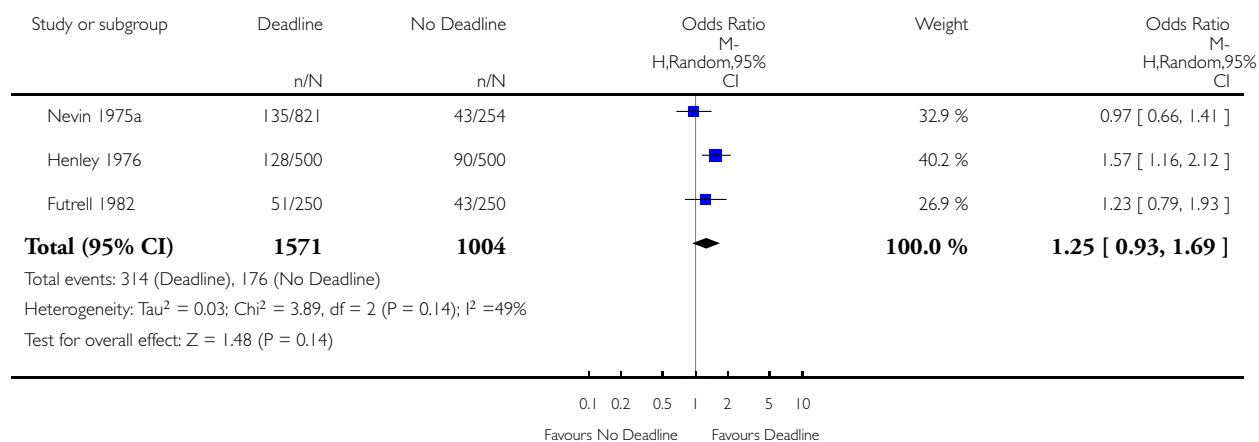


Analysis 105.1. Comparison 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline

Outcome: 1 First response

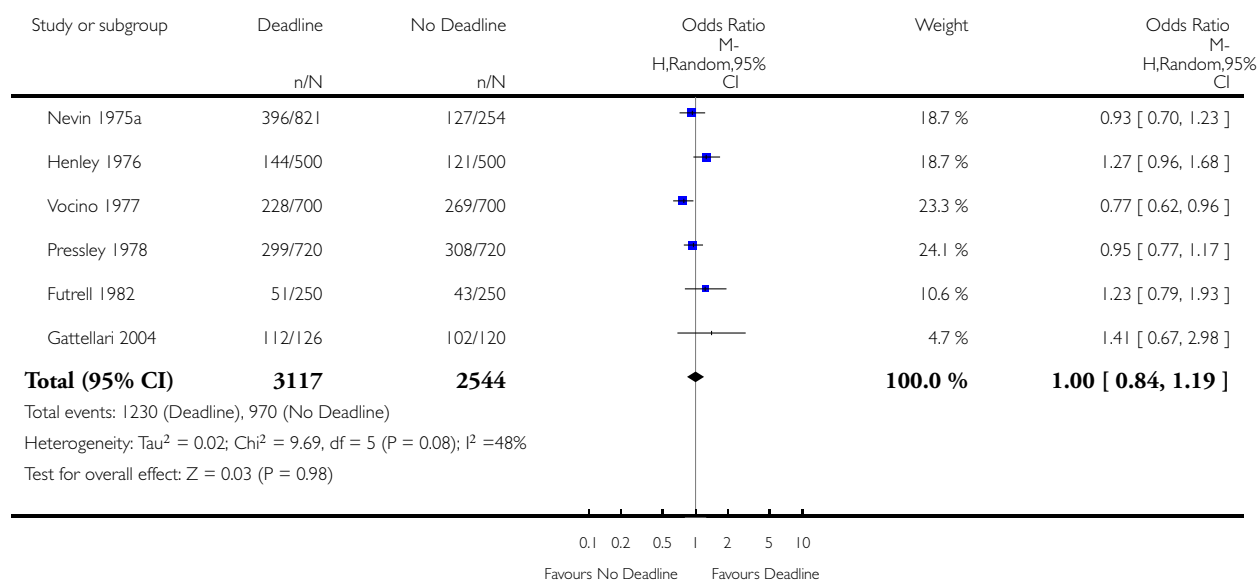


Analysis 105.2. Comparison 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline

Outcome: 2 Final response

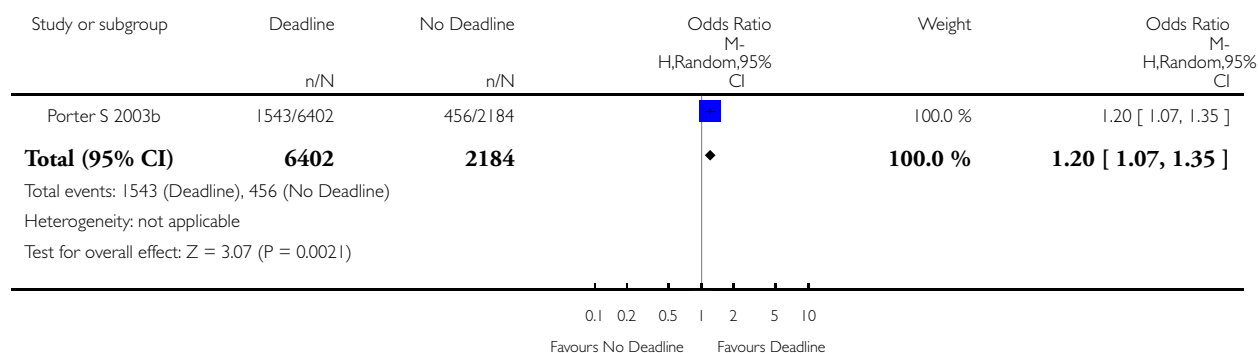


Analysis 105.3. Comparison 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline

Outcome: 3 e - Login

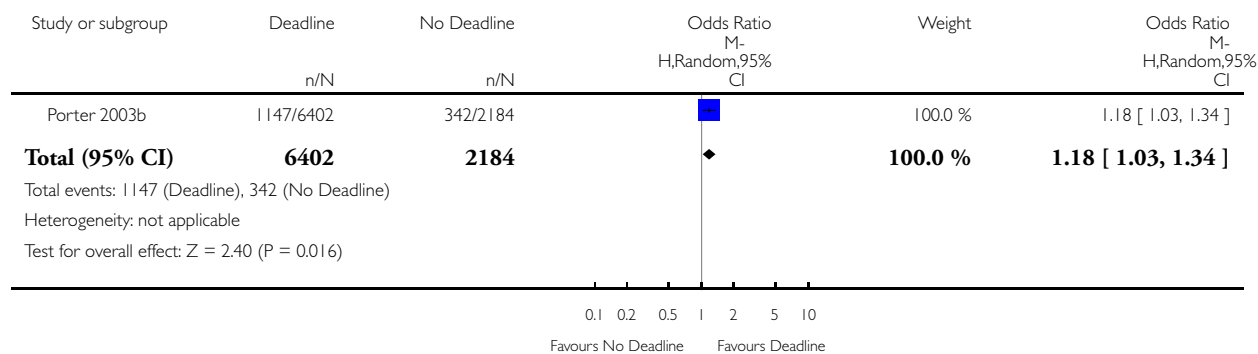


Analysis 105.4. Comparison 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 105 Response deadline given vs. no deadline

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

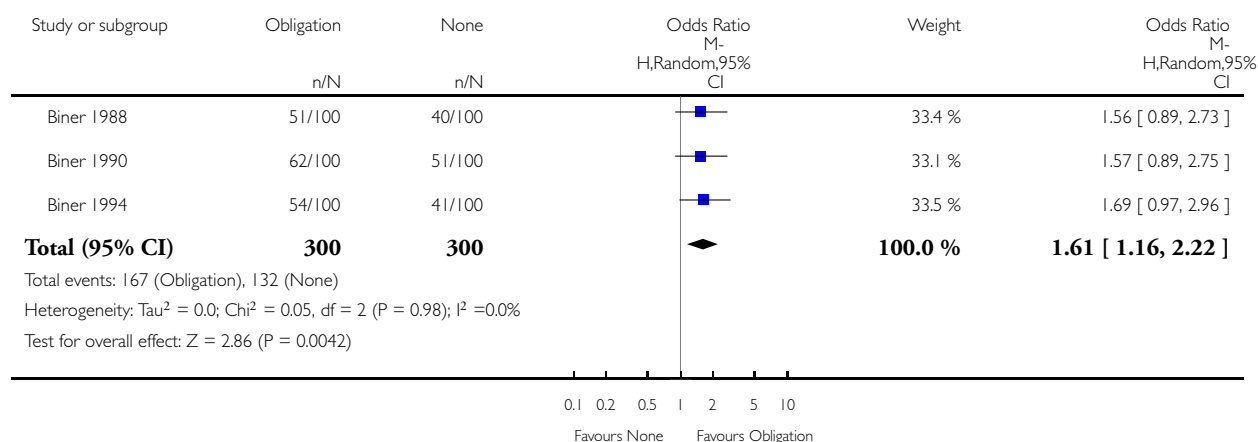


Analysis 106.1. Comparison 106 Mention of obligation to respond vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 106 Mention of obligation to respond vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

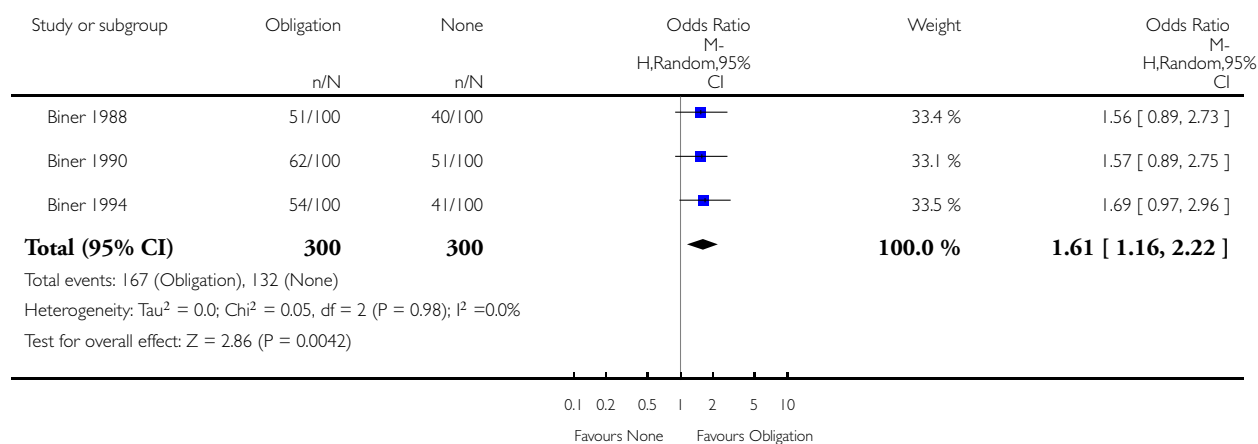


Analysis 106.2. Comparison 106 Mention of obligation to respond vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 106 Mention of obligation to respond vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

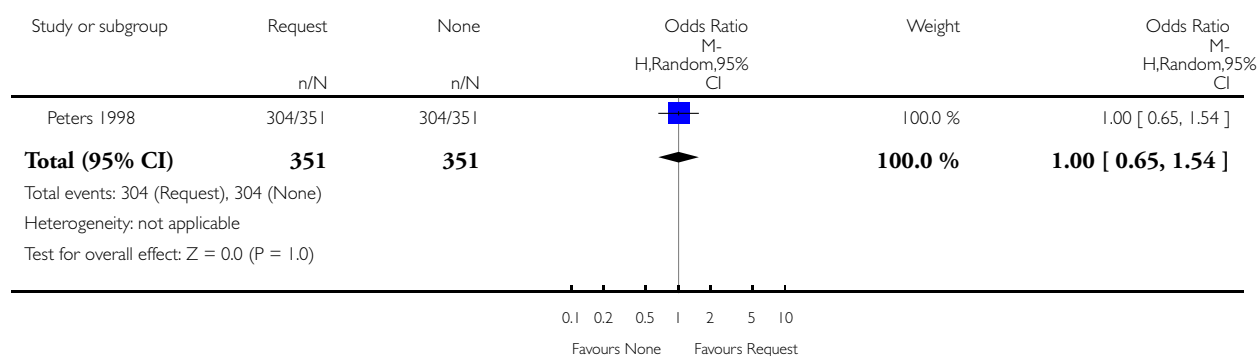


Analysis 107.1. Comparison 107 Request for telephone number vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 107 Request for telephone number vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

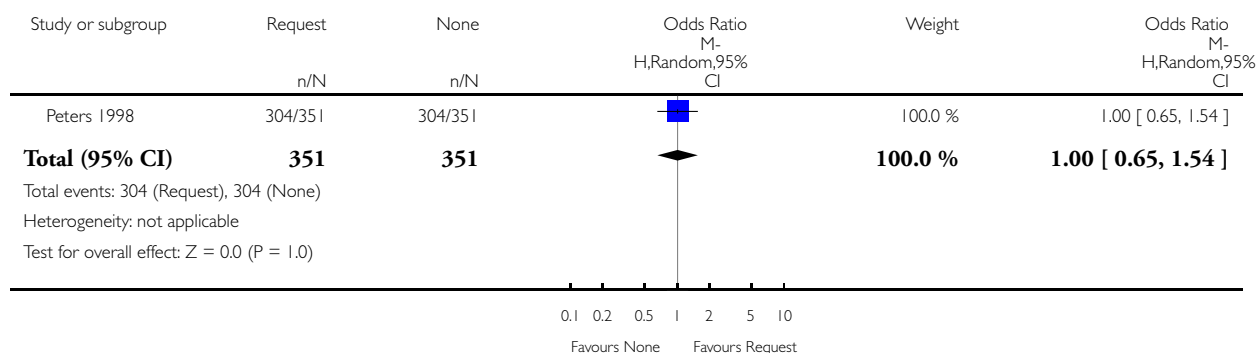


Analysis 107.2. Comparison 107 Request for telephone number vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 107 Request for telephone number vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

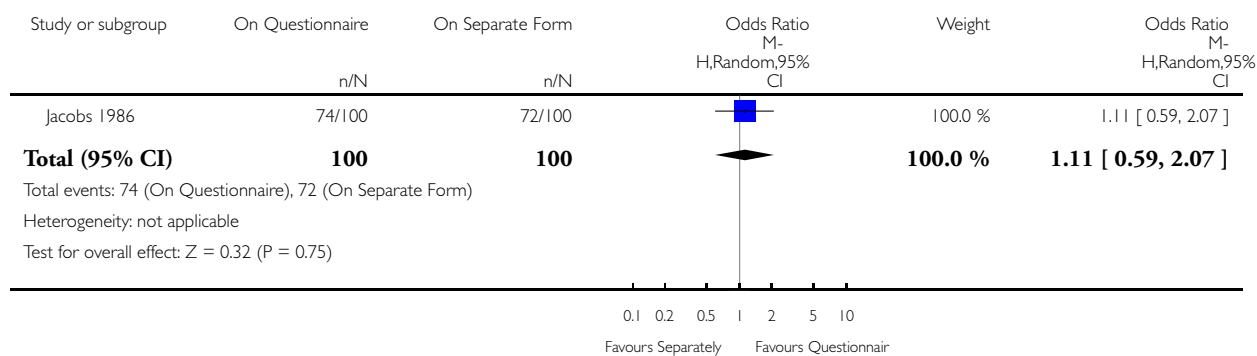


Analysis 108.1. Comparison 108 Respond on questionnaire vs. on separate form, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 108 Respond on questionnaire vs. on separate form

Outcome: 1 First response

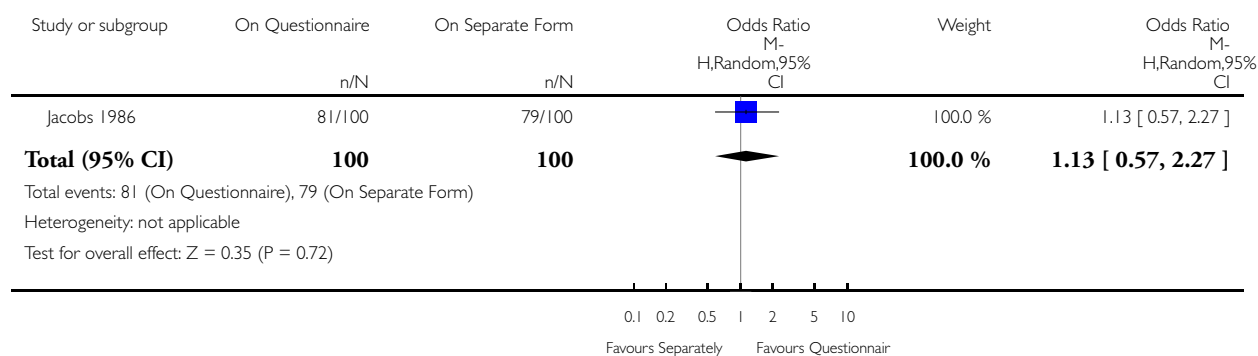


Analysis 108.2. Comparison 108 Respond on questionnaire vs. on separate form, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 108 Respond on questionnaire vs. on separate form

Outcome: 2 Final response

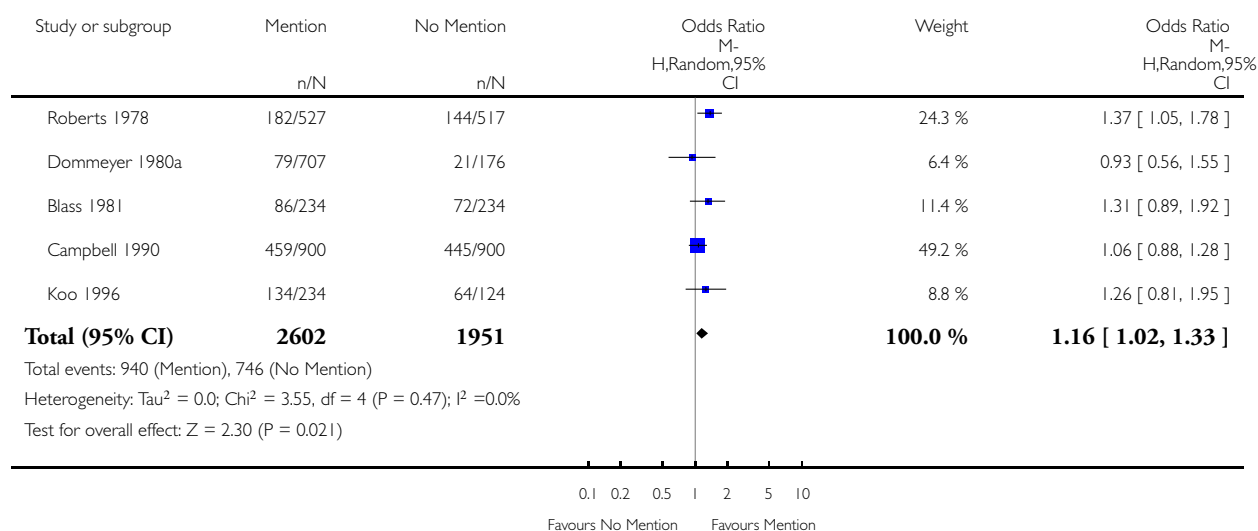


Analysis 109.1. Comparison 109 Mention of follow-up contact vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 109 Mention of follow-up contact vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

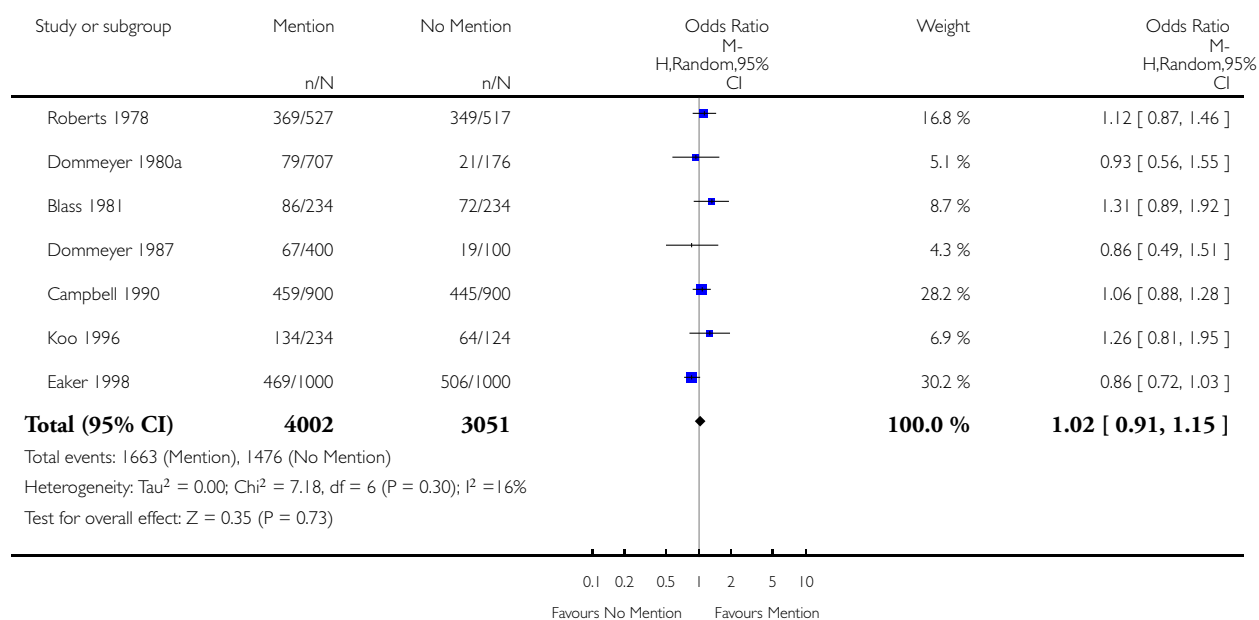


Analysis 109.2. Comparison 109 Mention of follow-up contact vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 109 Mention of follow-up contact vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

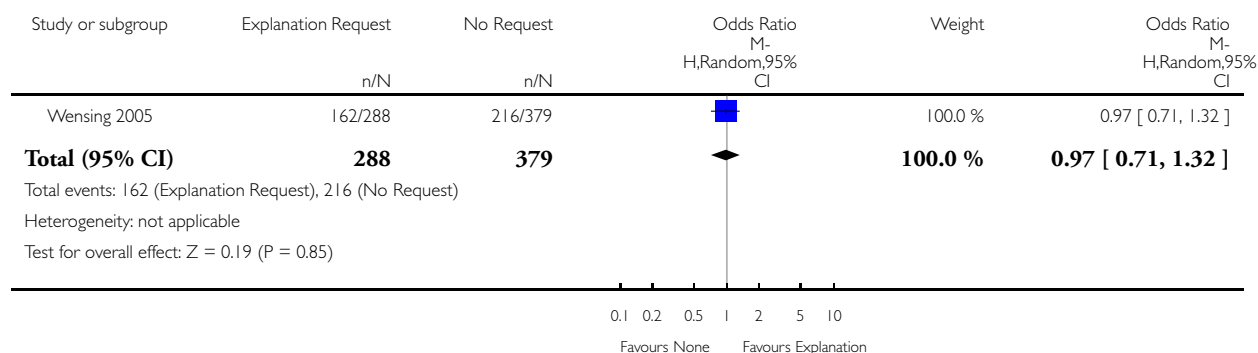


Analysis 110.1. Comparison 110 Explanation for non-participation requested vs. not, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 110 Explanation for non-participation requested vs. not

Outcome: 1 First response

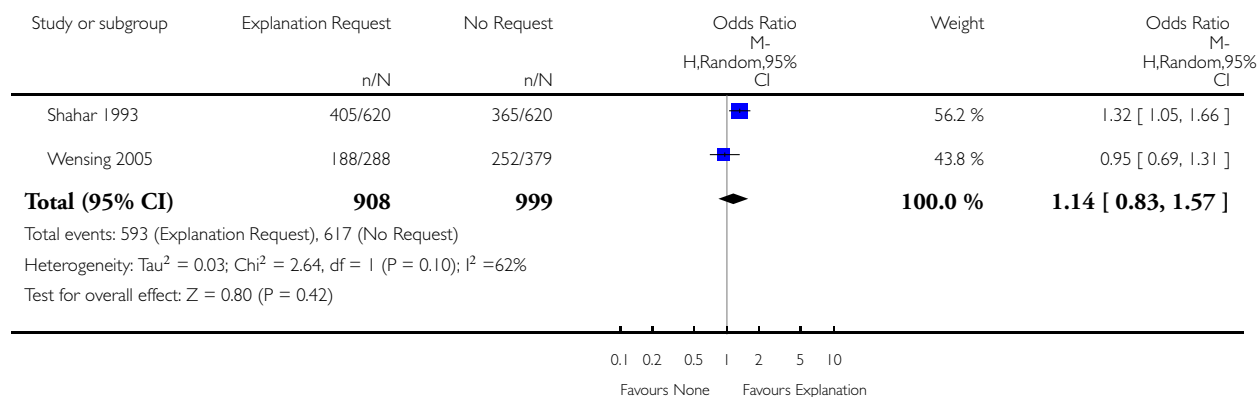


Analysis 110.2. Comparison 110 Explanation for non-participation requested vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 110 Explanation for non-participation requested vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

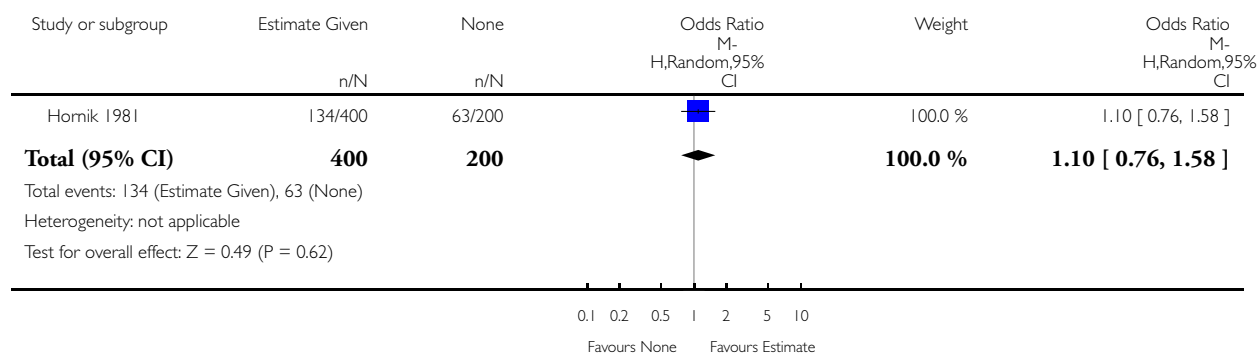


Analysis 111.1. Comparison 111 Time estimate for completion given vs. not, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 111 Time estimate for completion given vs. not

Outcome: 1 First response

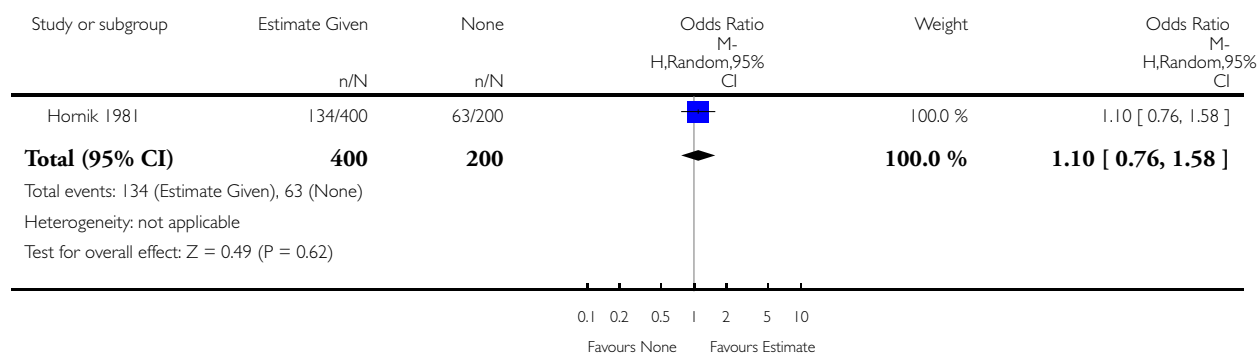


Analysis 111.2. Comparison 111 Time estimate for completion given vs. not, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 111 Time estimate for completion given vs. not

Outcome: 2 Final response

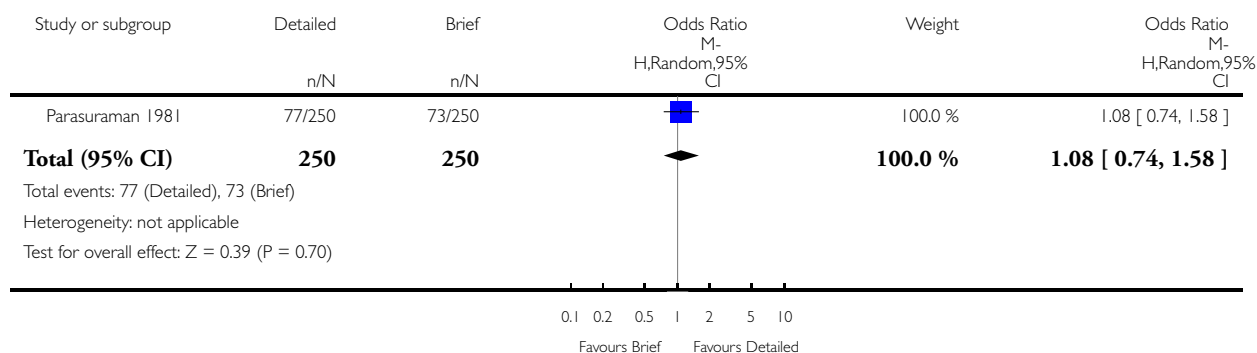


Analysis 112.2. Comparison 112 Detailed vs. brief cover letter, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 112 Detailed vs. brief cover letter

Outcome: 2 Final response

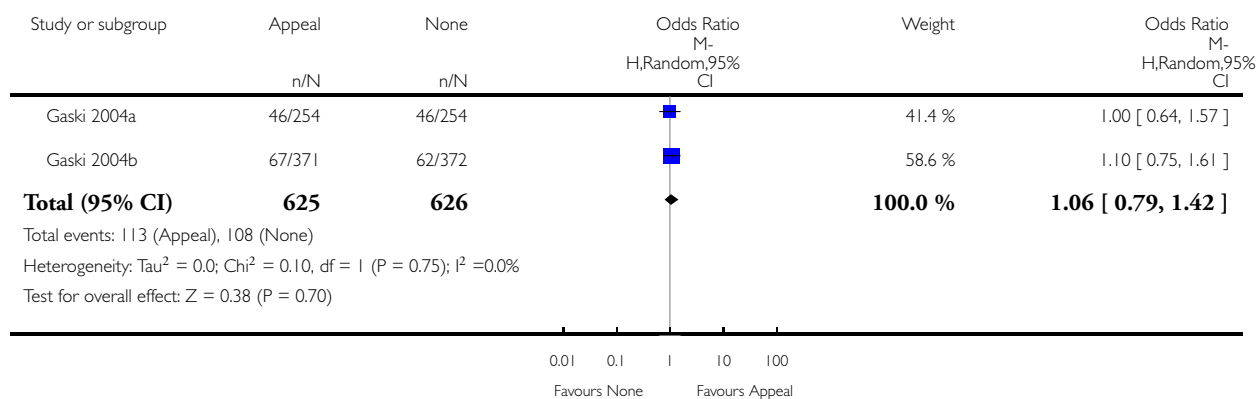


Analysis 113.2. Comparison 113 Appeal vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 113 Appeal vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

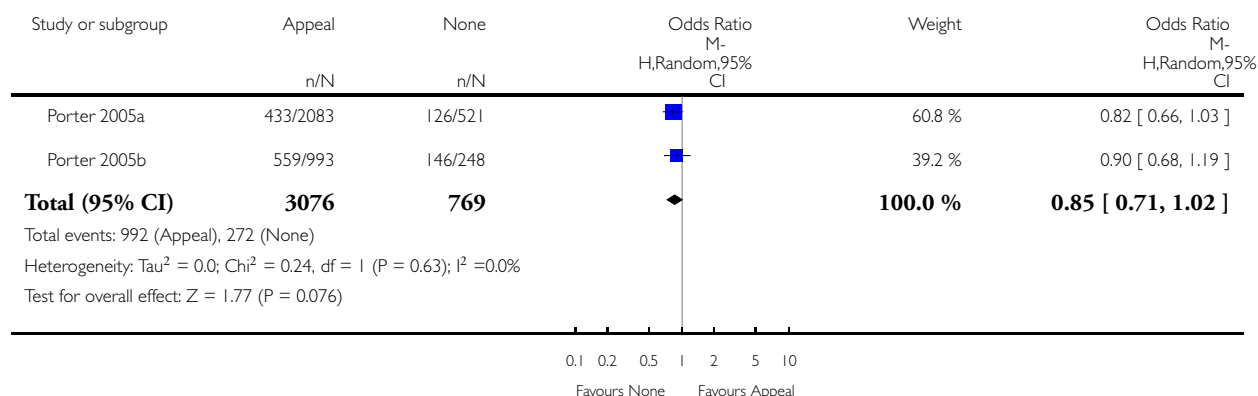


Analysis 113.3. Comparison 113 Appeal vs. none, Outcome 3 e - Login.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 113 Appeal vs. none

Outcome: 3 e - Login

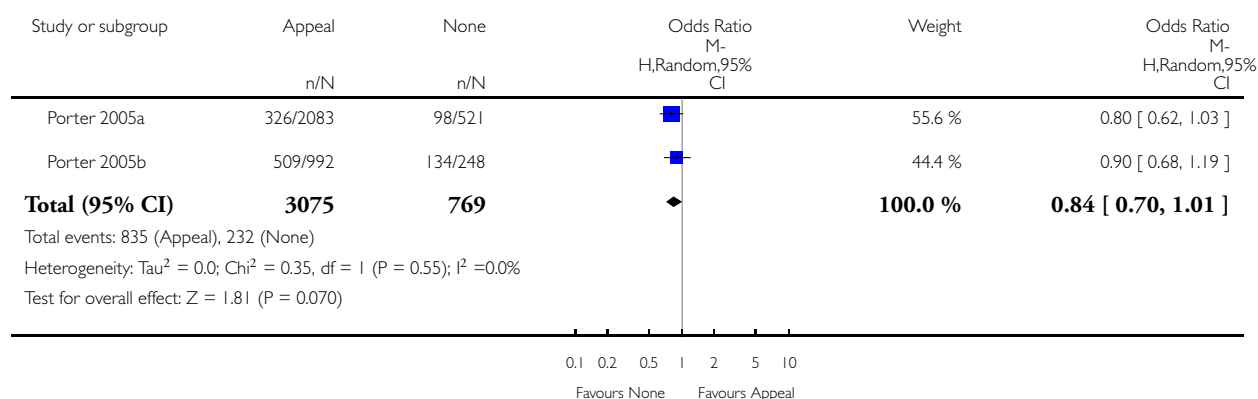


Analysis 113.4. Comparison 113 Appeal vs. none, Outcome 4 e - Submission.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 113 Appeal vs. none

Outcome: 4 e - Submission

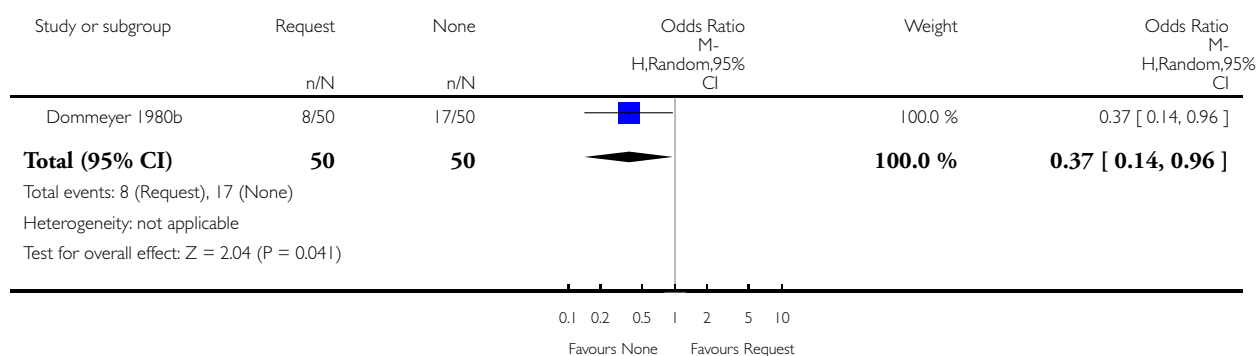


Analysis 114.1. Comparison 114 Note requesting not to remove ID code vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 114 Note requesting not to remove ID code vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

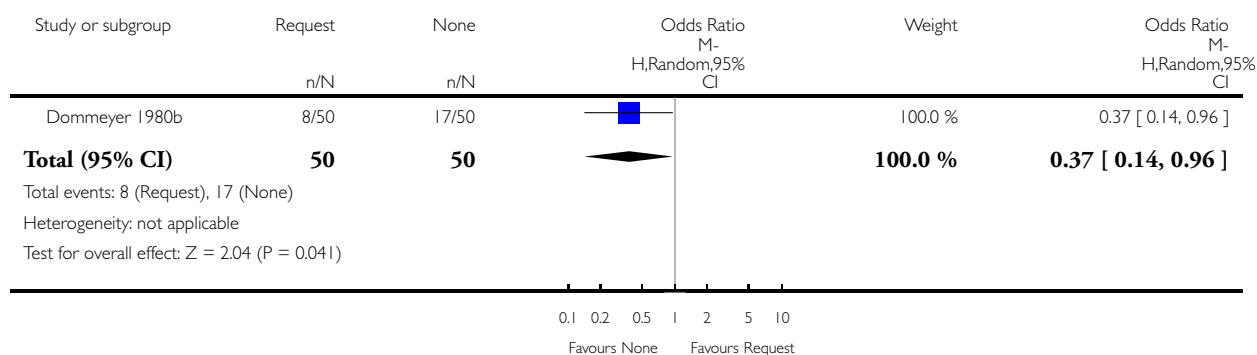


Analysis 114.2. Comparison 114 Note requesting not to remove ID code vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 114 Note requesting not to remove ID code vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

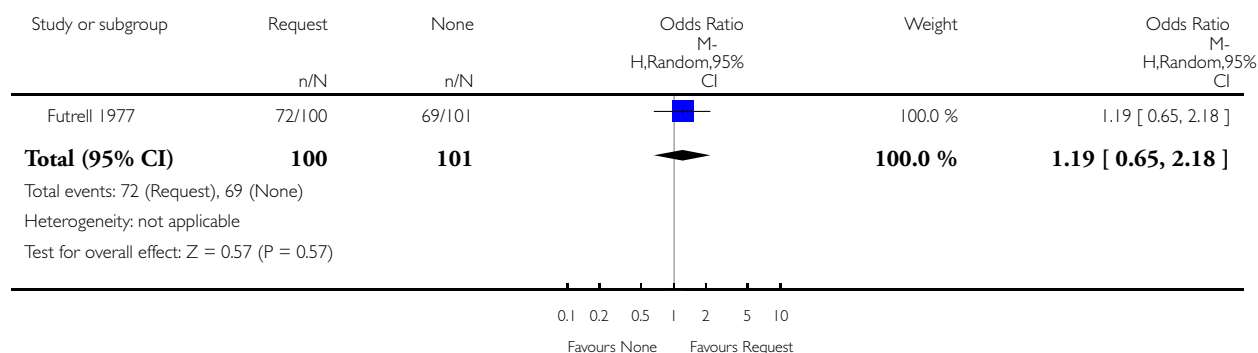


Analysis 115.2. Comparison 115 Request for participant signature vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 115 Request for participant signature vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

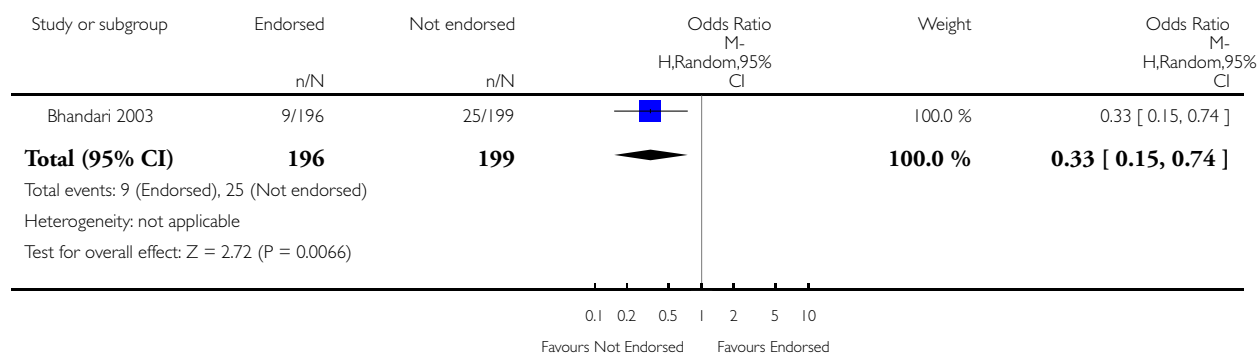


Analysis 116.1. Comparison 116 Questionnaire endorsed vs. not endorsed, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 116 Questionnaire endorsed vs. not endorsed

Outcome: 1 First response

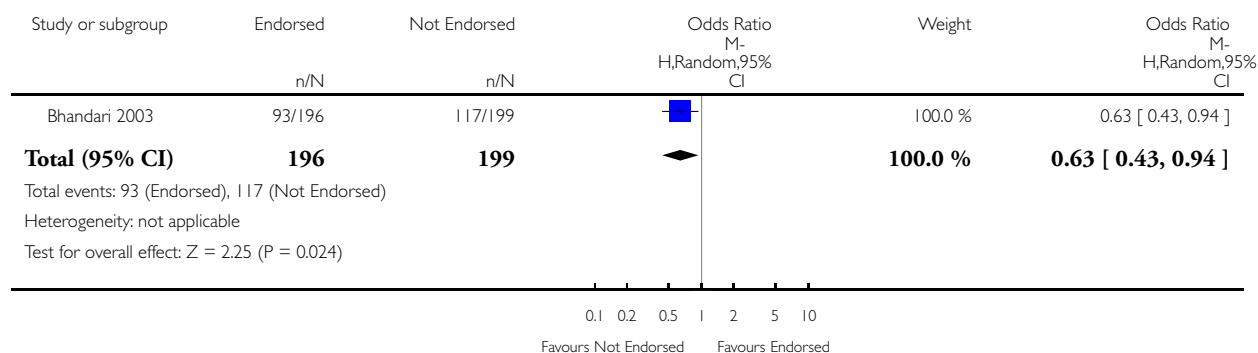


Analysis 116.2. Comparison 116 Questionnaire endorsed vs. not endorsed, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 116 Questionnaire endorsed vs. not endorsed

Outcome: 2 Final response

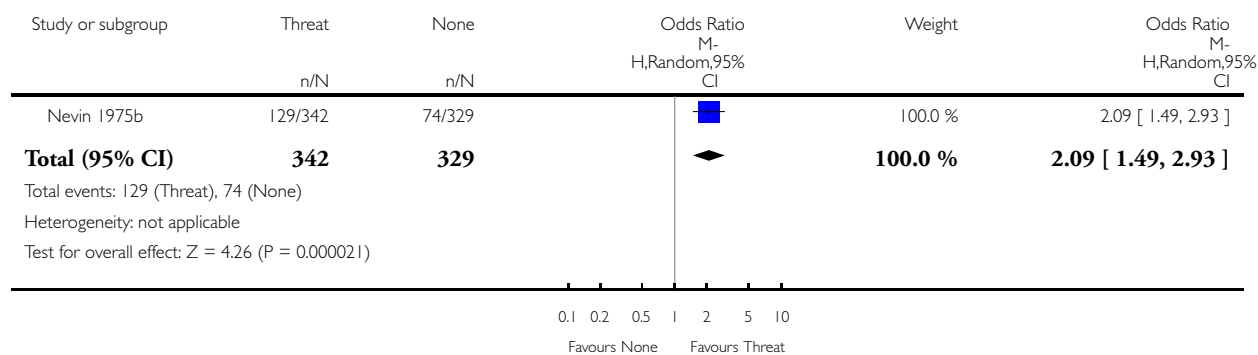


Analysis 117.1. Comparison 117 Veiled threat in follow-up letter vs. none, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 117 Veiled threat in follow-up letter vs. none

Outcome: 1 First response

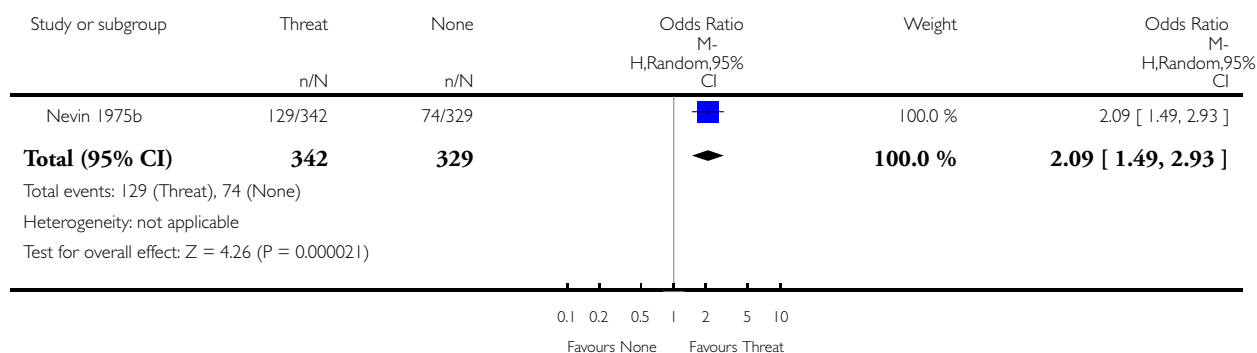


Analysis 117.2. Comparison 117 Veiled threat in follow-up letter vs. none, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 117 Veiled threat in follow-up letter vs. none

Outcome: 2 Final response

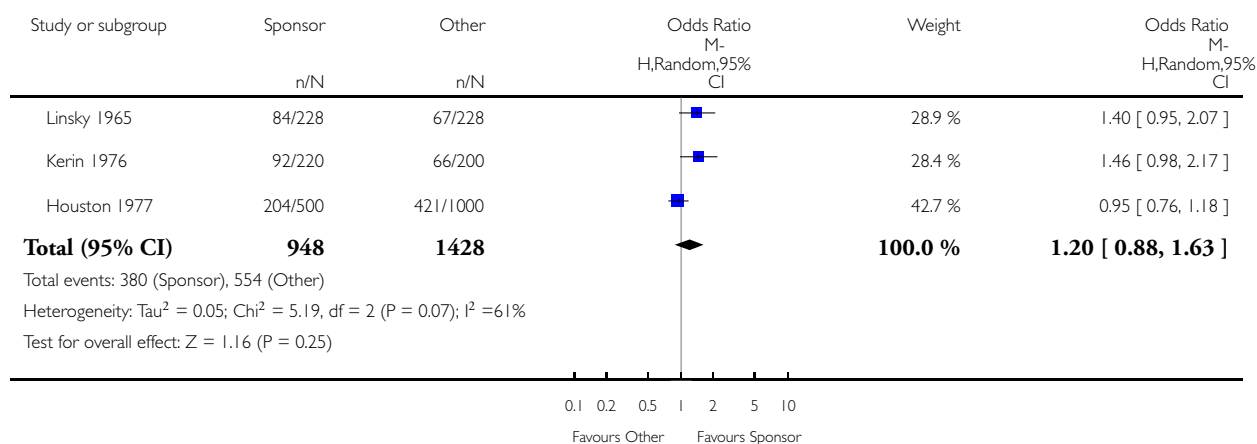


Analysis 118.1. Comparison 118 Appeal stresses benefit to sponsor vs. other, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 118 Appeal stresses benefit to sponsor vs. other

Outcome: 1 First response

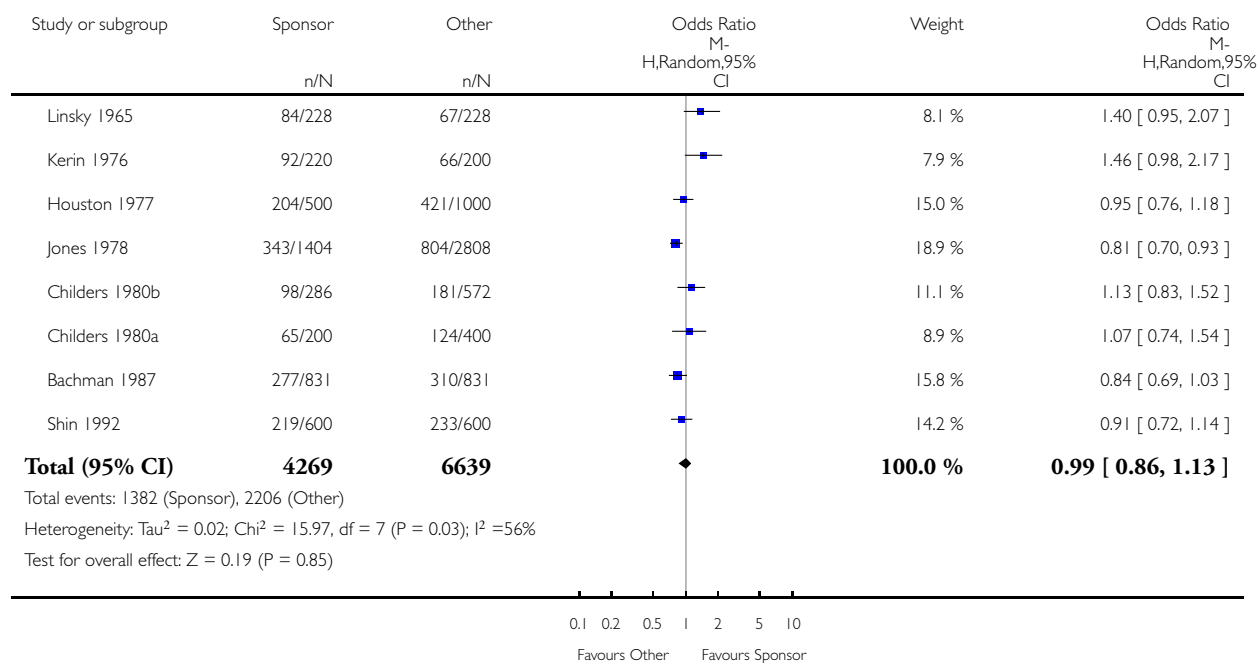


Analysis 118.2. Comparison 118 Appeal stresses benefit to sponsor vs. other, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 118 Appeal stresses benefit to sponsor vs. other

Outcome: 2 Final response

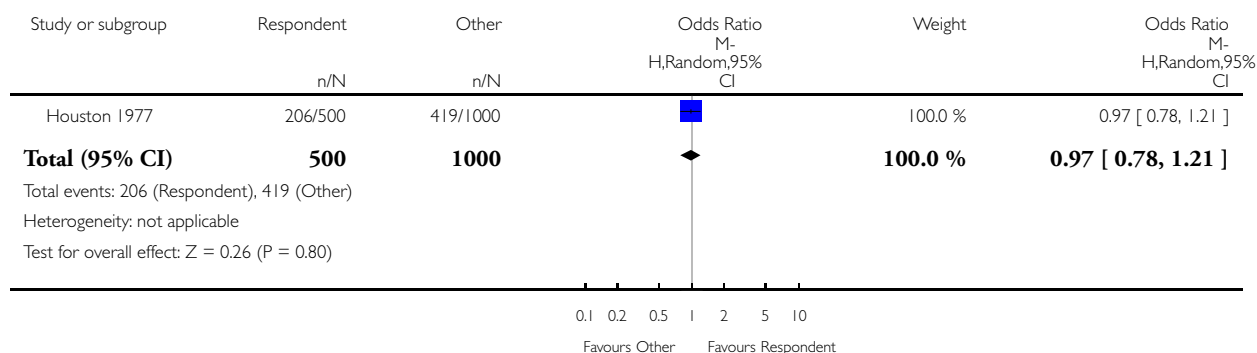


Analysis 119.1. Comparison 119 Appeal stresses benefit to respondent vs. other, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 119 Appeal stresses benefit to respondent vs. other

Outcome: 1 First response

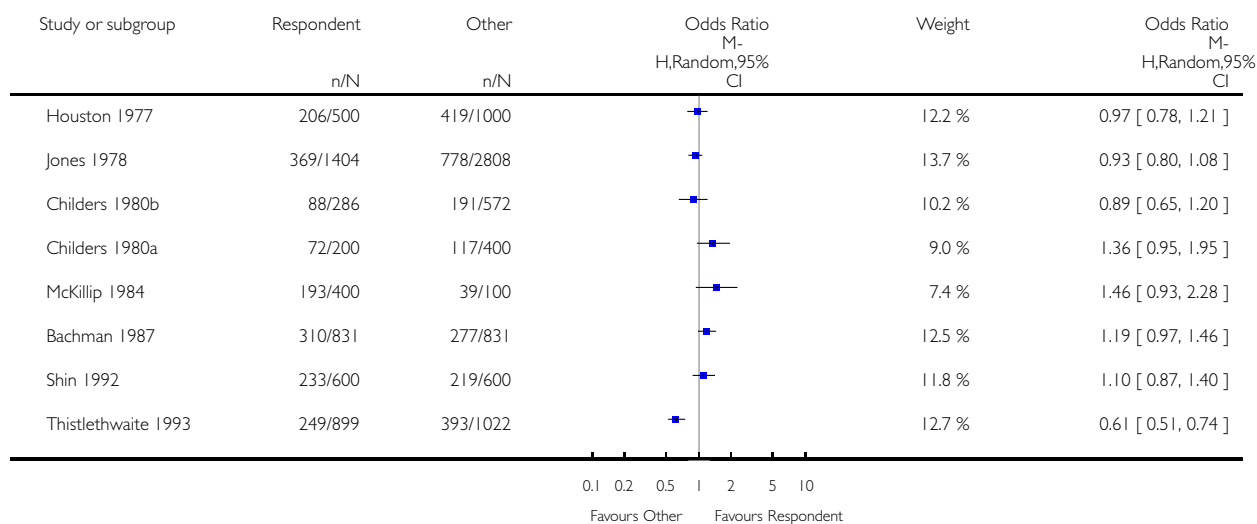


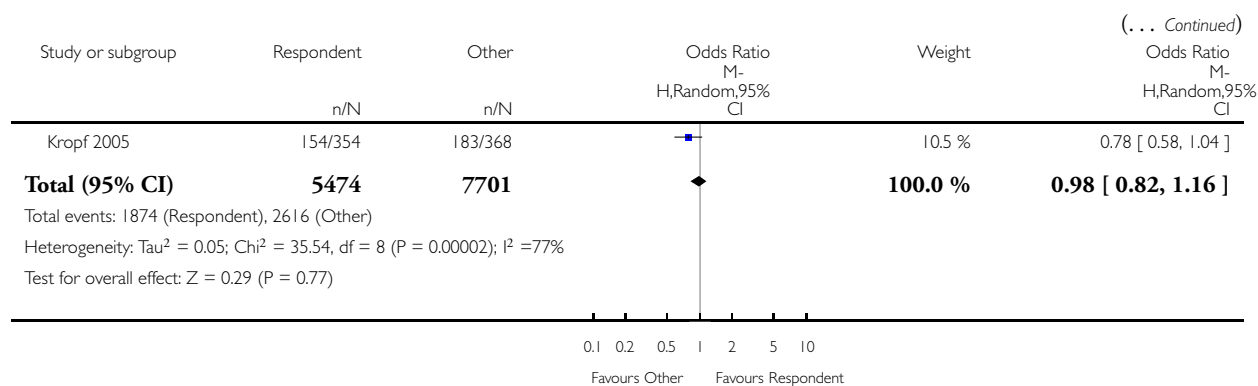
Analysis 119.2. Comparison 119 Appeal stresses benefit to respondent vs. other, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 119 Appeal stresses benefit to respondent vs. other

Outcome: 2 Final response



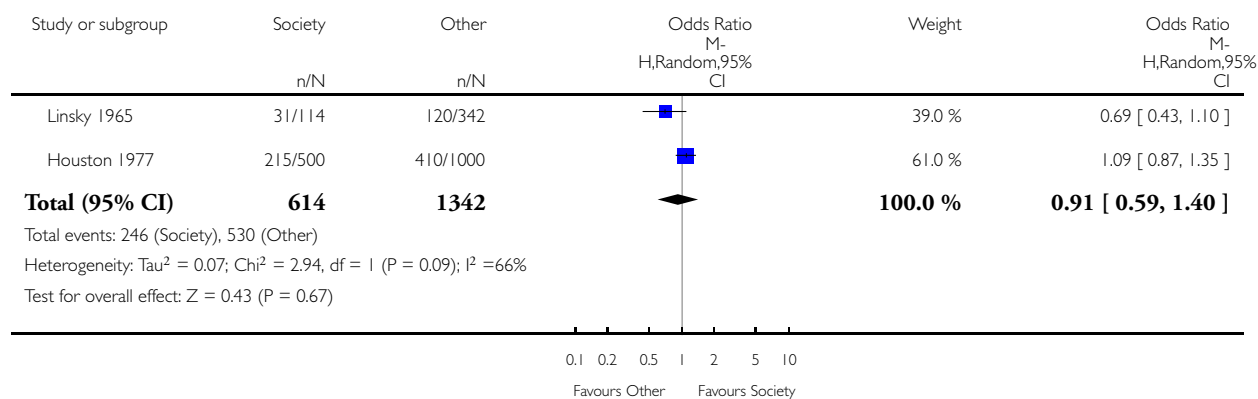


Analysis 120.1. Comparison 120 Appeal stresses benefit to society vs. other, Outcome 1 First response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 120 Appeal stresses benefit to society vs. other

Outcome: 1 First response

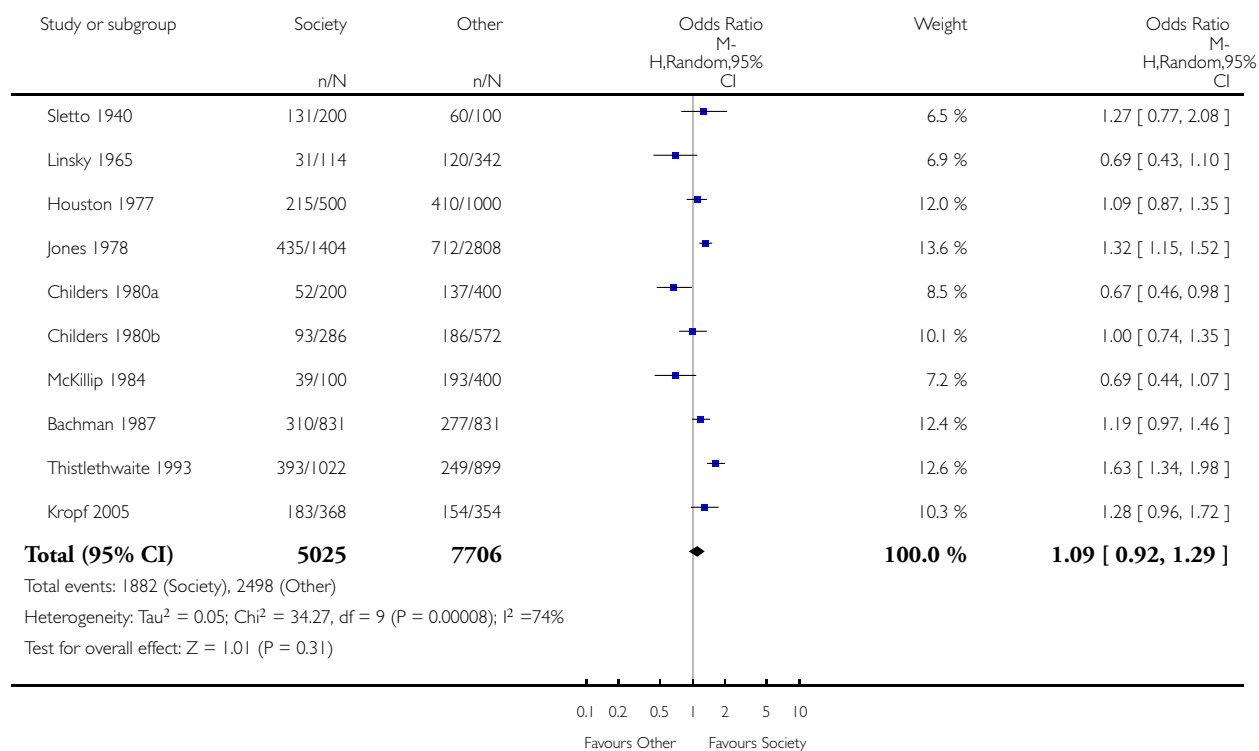


Analysis 120.2. Comparison 120 Appeal stresses benefit to society vs. other, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 120 Appeal stresses benefit to society vs. other

Outcome: 2 Final response

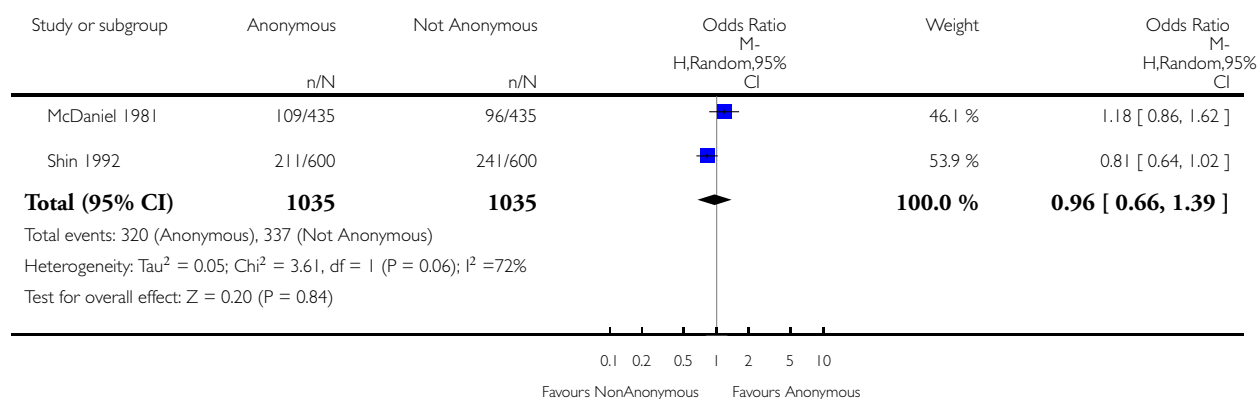


Analysis 121.2. Comparison 121 Anonymous vs. not anonymous, Outcome 2 Final response.

Review: Methods to increase response to postal and electronic questionnaires

Comparison: 121 Anonymous vs. not anonymous

Outcome: 2 Final response



APPENDICES

Appendix I. Search strategy

Electronic bibliographic databases

Search strategies were developed for use in a range of electronic bibliographic databases.

Database time period or version

Cochrane Controlled Trials Register 1999.3

CINAHL 1982 - 1999.07

ERIC 1982 - 1998.09

PsycLit 1887 - 1999.09

Dissertation Abstracts 1861 - 1999.08

MEDLINE 1966 - 1999

EMBASE 1980 - 1999.08

A. questionair* or survey* or data collection

B. respon* or return*

C. remind* or letter* or postcard* or incentiv* or reward* or money* or monetary or payment* or lottery or raffle or prize or personalis* or sponsor* or anonym* or length or style* or format or appearance or color or colour or stationery or envelope or stamp* or postage or certified or registered or telephon* or telefon* or notice or dispatch* or deliver* or deadline or sensitive

D. control* or randomi* or blind* or mask* or trial* or compar* or experiment* or "exp" or factorial

E. A and B and C and D

Social Science Citation Index 1981 - 1999

Science Citation Index 1981 - 1999

[(survey* or questionnaire*) and (return* or respon*)]

Social Psychological Educational Criminological Trials Register (SPECTR) 1950 - 1998

EconLit 1969 - 2000

Sociological Abstracts 1963 - 2000

((survey\$ or questionn\$) and (return\$ or respon\$)).ti

or ((survey\$ or questionn\$) and (mail\$ or post\$)).ti

or ((return\$ or respon\$) and (mail\$ or post\$)).ti

Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings 1982 - 2000

((survey*, questionn*)+(return*,respon*))@TI,

((return*,respon*)+(mail,mailed,postal))@TI,

((survey*,questionn*)+(mail,mailed,postal))@TI

National Research Register (Web version): 2000.1

((survey*:ti or questionn*:ti) and (return*:ti or respon*:ti))

or ((return*:ti or respon*:ti) and (mail:ti or mailed:ti or postal:ti))

or ((survey*:ti or questionn*:ti) and (mail:ti or mailed:ti or postal:ti))

The following literature reviews and meta-analyses were inspected for eligible trials:

- Armstrong JS. Monetary incentives in mail surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1975;39:111-6.
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The following journals were searched by hand:

Public Opinion Quarterly 1960 to 1998

American Journal of Epidemiology 1948 to 1999

Reliability of screening for eligible trials

The electronic bibliographic searches outlined above yielded several thousand records of potentially relevant reports that were then screened to determine eligibility. Because exclusion of reports during screening would mean that they would not be considered again, we assessed the accuracy and reliability of screening for relevant trials using the records retrieved by a search of ten databases.

A search of ten electronic bibliographic databases yielded 26,937 records of potentially relevant reports that were downloaded into a ProCite database. After removing duplicate records, there were 22,571 records of potentially relevant reports. These records were divided into six approximately equal sets (A to F) and each of four reviewers was allocated three of the sets to screen. The six sets were allocated such that two reviewers examined each record and identification of trials by each reviewer could be compared with each of the other reviewers. Agreement between reviewers was assessed using Cohen's kappa statistic (k) which adjusts the proportion of records in which there was agreement between reviewers by the amount of agreement that is expected by chance alone. Ascertainment intersection (capture-recapture) methods (Hook 1992) were then used to estimate the likely number of relevant records missed by all four reviewers. When screening was complete, full copies of the reports identified by at least one reviewer as potentially relevant were requested. Each report obtained was assessed independently by two reviewers for eligibility for inclusion in the systematic review. Disagreements about eligibility were referred to a third reviewer. Eligible reports were used as the 'gold standard' against which an assessment was made about the accuracy of screening by reviewers.

After screening, 301 of 22,571 records were identified by at least one reviewer as potentially relevant. Of the six possible comparisons between reviewers, kappa coefficients of agreement ranged from 0.59 (95% CI 0.56 to 0.62) to 0.93 (95% CI 0.90 to 0.96). Agreement was 'almost perfect' ($k > 0.81$) between two pairs, 'substantial' ($k > 0.61$) between three pairs, and 'moderate' ($k > 0.41$) between one pair. Ascertainment intersection methods suggest that, on average, pairs of reviewers missed 4% (range 0% to 6%) of potentially relevant records. In contrast, single reviewers missed on average 22% (range 3% to 55%). Twenty-eight reports were not available by the time of the ascertainment intersection analysis. Of the 273 reports that were available, 156 (57%) met the inclusion criteria for the systematic review. Ascertainment intersection methods estimated that pairs of reviewers had missed very few eligible records (0 records missed, 95% CI 0 to 3 records). In the light of these results we believe that very few eligible trials were inappropriately excluded during screening.

Sensitivity of combined search strategy

The sensitivity of the search strategy was assessed by handsearching Public Opinion Quarterly and comparing the trials identified by handsearching with those identified by the combined search strategy. Of the 40 eligible trials identified by hand searching, 15 trials had been identified from electronic bibliographic databases and 23 had been identified from the reference lists of identified trials and relevant meta-analyses. Two studies identified by handsearching were not identified by any part of the combined search strategy. On the basis of these results, electronic bibliographic database searching had a sensitivity of 38% (15/40), searching reference lists of identified trials and relevant meta-analyses had a sensitivity of 58% (23/40), and the combined search strategy had a sensitivity of 95% (38/40), (95% CI 84% to 99%).

UPDATE OF REVIEW: 2003

In 2003 the following databases were searched again using the appropriate strategies detailed above.

Database time period or version

Cochrane Controlled Trials Register 2002.4
 CINAHL 1999.07 - 2003.02
 ERIC 1998.09 - 2003.01
 PsycLit 1999.09 - 2003.02
 Dissertation Abstracts 1999.08 - 2003.02
 MEDLINE 1999 - 2003
 EMBASE 1999.08 - 2003.02
 Science Citation Index 1999 - 2003
 Social Science Citation Index 1999 - 2003
 Social Psychological Educational Criminological Trials Register (SPECTR) 1998 - 2003
 EconLit 2000 - 2003.01
 Sociological Abstracts 2000 - 2002.12
 Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings 2000 - 2003
 National Research Register (Web version): 2003.2

A search of these databases yielded 6423 records of potentially relevant reports that were downloaded into a ProCite database. Two reviewers examined each record so that identification of trials by each reviewer could be compared. After screening, 194 of 6423 records were identified by at least one reviewer as potentially relevant.

During the update, attempts were made to obtain sufficient information on studies awaiting assessment to be able to include or exclude them from the review. This included writing to or emailing the authors of all potentially eligible trials and those in studies awaiting assessment.

UPDATE OF REVIEW: 2008

In 2008 the following databases were searched again using the appropriate strategies detailed above. The search also included electronic-based questionnaires such as those sent via e-mail, and online surveys.

Cochrane Library Online Issue 4 2007 CENTRAL
 Cochrane Library Online Issue 4 2007 Methodology studies (CMR)

CINAHL 2003 - 2007.12
 ERIC 2003 - 2007.12
 PsycINFO 2003 - 2008.01
 MEDLINE 2003 - 2007.11
 EMBASE 2003 - 2007.10
 Science Citation Index 2003 - 2008.01
 Social Science Citation Index 2003 - 2008.01
 Social Psychological Educational Criminological Trials Register (SPECTR) 2003 - 2007.12
 EconLit 2003 - 2007.12
 Sociological Abstracts 2003 - 2007.12
 Dissertation & Theses 2003 - 2008.01
 Index to Scientific & Technical Proceedings 2003 - 2008.01
 National Research Register (Web version): 2008.02

A search of these databases yielded 19,826 records of potentially relevant reports that were downloaded into an EndNote database. After removing duplicates, we identified 14,792 records. Two reviewers examined each record so that identification of trials by each reviewer could be compared. After screening, 253 of 14,792 records were identified by at least one reviewer as potentially relevant and their full texts were sought.

During the update, attempts were made to obtain sufficient information on studies awaiting assessment to be able to include or exclude them from the review. This included writing to or emailing the authors of all potentially eligible trials and those studies awaiting assessment.

Appendix 2. Conversion of odds ratios to response rates from different baseline rates

Odd ra- tio	0. 50	0. 75	1. 00	1. 25	1. 50	1. 75	2. 00	2. 25	2.50	2.75	3.00	
Base line %												
10	5	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	23	25	
20	11	16	20	24	27	30	33	36	38	41	43	
30	18	24	30	35	39	43	46	49	52	54	56	
40	25	33	40	45	50	54	57	60	63	65	67	
50	33	43	50	56	60	64	67	69	71	73	75	
60	43	53	60	65	69	72	75	77	79	80	82	
65	48	58	65	70	74	76	79	81	82	84	85	
70	54	64	70	74	78	80	82	84	85	87	88	
75	60	69	75	79	82	84	86	87	88	89	90	

(Continued)

80	67	75	80	83	86	88	89	90	91	92	92	
85	74	81	85	88	89	91	92	93	93	94	94	
90	82	87	90	92	93	94	95	95	96	96	96	
95	90	93	95	96	97	97	97	98	98	98	98	

WHAT'S NEW

Last assessed as up-to-date: 9 December 2008.

Date	Event	Description
12 May 2009	New citation required but conclusions have not changed	The current update includes randomised controlled trials of questionnaires distributed by electronic mail, and strategies designed to improve response to online or web surveys
10 December 2008	New search has been performed	This review has been updated (new search December 2007). The current update includes 481 eligible trials that evaluated 110 different strategies for increasing response to postal questionnaires and 32 eligible trials that evaluated 27 different strategies for increasing response to electronic questionnaires. A new search was re-run February 2009 in MEDLINE and Psycinfo and 23 possibly eligible trials are listed under Studies awaiting classification

HISTORY

Protocol first published: Issue 2, 1999

Review first published: Issue 3, 2001

Date	Event	Description
27 December 2007	Amended	Converted to new review format.
20 February 2007	New citation required and conclusions have changed	Substantive amendment

CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUTHORS

Mike Clarke, Carolyn DiGiuseppi, Phil Edwards and Ian Roberts contributed to study design, record screening, reviewing reports, data extraction and drafting of the report. Phil Edwards and Ian Roberts analysed the data. Sarah Pratap and Irene Kwan contributed to data searches and data extraction. Reinhard Wentz conducted all electronic searches. Phil Edwards and Rachel Cooper contributed to record screening, reviewing reports, data extraction, additional data analysis and alterations to the report during the 2003 update. Phil Edwards and Lambert Felix contributed to record screening, reviewing reports, data extraction, additional data analysis and alterations to the report during the 2008 update.

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None.

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INDEX TERMS

Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)

*Correspondence as Topic; *Surveys and Questionnaires; Electronic Mail; Randomized Controlled Trials as Topic; Reminder Systems; Reward